The Bush Attack: Social Security (See page 5)

COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

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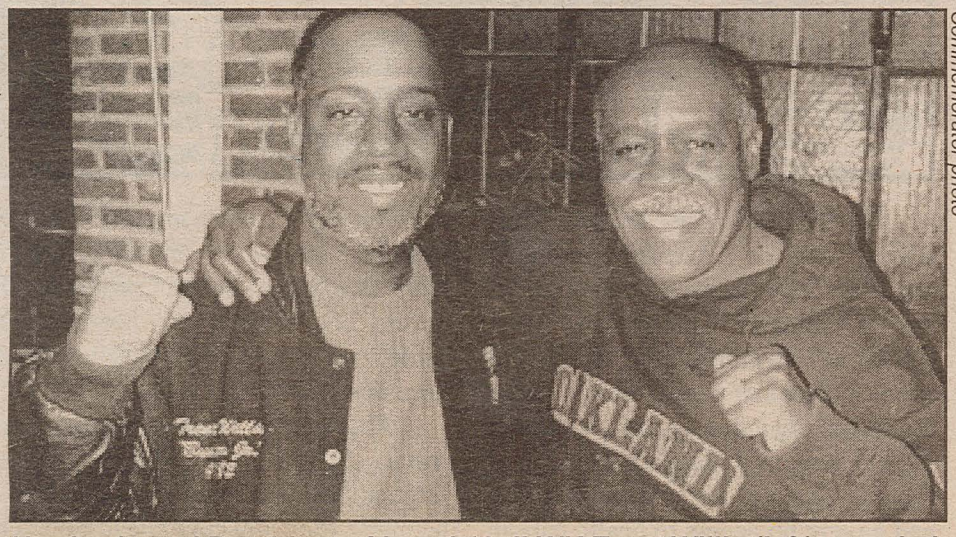
Million Worker March Demands Fundamental Change



Commemorator photo

Newly elected President of Local 10, ILWU,Trent Willis (left), co-chair of the Million Worker March, and David Hilliard, BPP Founding Member and Executive Director of The Huey P. Newton Foundation.

By Melvin Dickson

Editor's note: On October 17, 2004, ten thousand people converged at the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. under the banner of the Million Worker March to voice their demands to the federal government about health care, living wage jobs, education, US aggression in other countries killing working people around the world, including the US war in Iraq, and much more. The Million Worker March (MWM) demonstrated the anger of workers and unemployed people, union members and non-union members, organizers and activists from across the country who came together to fight for change. The organizers of the march declared that no matter who was elected President of the United States, working people would have to organize to fight for the power to accomplish their goals and force the government to meet their demands.

Representatives of the MWM denounced the policies and political positions of both Kerry and Bush because both men represent the forces of US imperialism, doing the bidding of international monopoly capitalism led by the US-controlled World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The rally consisted of speakers who addressed a multiplicity of issues, denouncing the US based corporations outsourcing of jobs that once employed US tax-paying citizens, the general lack of living wage jobs throughout the world, and the fight inside the US for affordable healthcare, housing and education. Some speakers addressed the need for the American people to demand the federal government revoke the Patriot Act, as well as the imperialist policies that have led the US government to criminally occupy Iraq and Haiti.

The Million Worker March incorporated not only an advanced sector of the labor movement, but also unemployed workers, professionals and students, as well as representatives from organizations of the homeless and of temporary workers, independent contractors, part-time and seasonal workers, service and farm workers.

Melvin Dickson, Commemorator *editor, conducted the following interview with Trent Willis, who, along with Clarence Thomas, organized the Million Worker March. An emerging labor leader, Mr. Willis was recently elected President of International Longshore and Warehouse Union*

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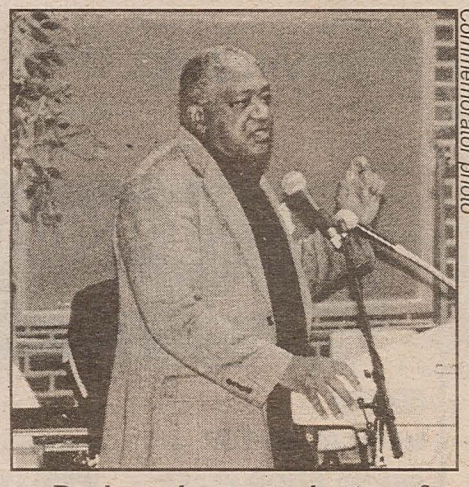
CCBPP Attends National Conference
Seale Delivers Keynote Address

Commemorator photo



Commemorator photo

Commemorator photo

Oakland-East Bay Congresswomen Barbara Lee speaks to reforming the criminal justice system (L). Bobby Seale delivers keynote address (C). CCBPP organizer Bobby Coleman gives children an orientation on the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Program (R).

"African-American males are already the most jailed gender of any nation or ethnicity in the world,"
Christopher Booker, author,
I Will Wear No Chain.

On December 3, 2004, at the State of the African-American Male (SAAM) conference held on California's Laney College campus in Oakland, California, the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) signed up potential volunteers to work on the production of our newspaper, *The Commemorator,* and recruited volunteers and supporters to participate in the Li'l Bobby Hutton literacy campaign. CCBPP volunteers Pamela Thomas, Constance James and Bobby Coleman staffed a literature table with a Black Panther Party mini-archive display to teach the history, goals and principles of the Black Panther Party. Bobby

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Editorial

Election Aftermath: A New Day

The Bush campaign raised and spent over $500 million to put their boy in the White House. The fact that the Kerry campaign raised and spent a similar amount demonstrates, without a shadow of a doubt, that the ruling-class would have been happy with either Yale-educated multi-millionaire son of the wealthy class. Both candidates campaigned to expand the war in Iraq.

Bush won, with votes in many areas still of dubious veracity and, even by bourgeois opinion polls, holding the LOWEST popularity rating of any just-reelected president in the entire time they have been tracking these figures. Since 1948, no incumbent president has, between the time of his reelection and his inauguration, managed to have an "approval rating" of less than 50%. According to *Time* magazine, Bush II weighed in at 48%.

Both candidates were for expanding the war in Iraq as well as Homeland Security.

Bush vowed to continue to expand the war in Iraq, despite the fact that 56% of the American people, according to the *Washington Post* poll, are against the Iraqi war and in favor of the withdrawal of the American troops.

The Bush administration has been moving with lightning-like speed to consolidate the recent election. It is creating more taxbreaks and mega-profits for the Halliburtons, the Bechtels and their Enron-type buddies.

Halliburton, the world's second largest provider of oil and gas pipeline services to the oil and gas industries and the company that gave Dick Cheney a one-day, $60 million donation when he resigned as CEO to run for United States Vice President in 2000, enjoys a sweetheart relationship with the Pentagon. Halliburton received a two-year gift of a $7 billion contract without competitive bidding. A $60 million payment for a $7 billion contract is a great return on investment in anybody's book. That comes to $116 for every dollar invested. And now the General Accounting Office reports that Halliburton cannot account for about one-third of the US Department of Defense money it received in Iraq.

The parasitic, capitalist ruling class thieves are trying to keep us from stopping them by destroying civil liberties and constitutional rights under the cloak of "homeland security." Yet the emperor has NO clothes with which to cloak himself. NO AMERICAN is more secure than we were four years ago. Even the top rulers of this country cannot visit with the heads of friendly nations without fear. In December 2004, the right-wing President of Chile cancelled a state dinner with President Bush after refusing to acquiesce to what he considered an unacceptable indignity — United States Secret Service demands to be allowed to pat down and run metal detectors over the bodies of the Chilean cabinet, legislature and Supreme Court Justices. Imagine!

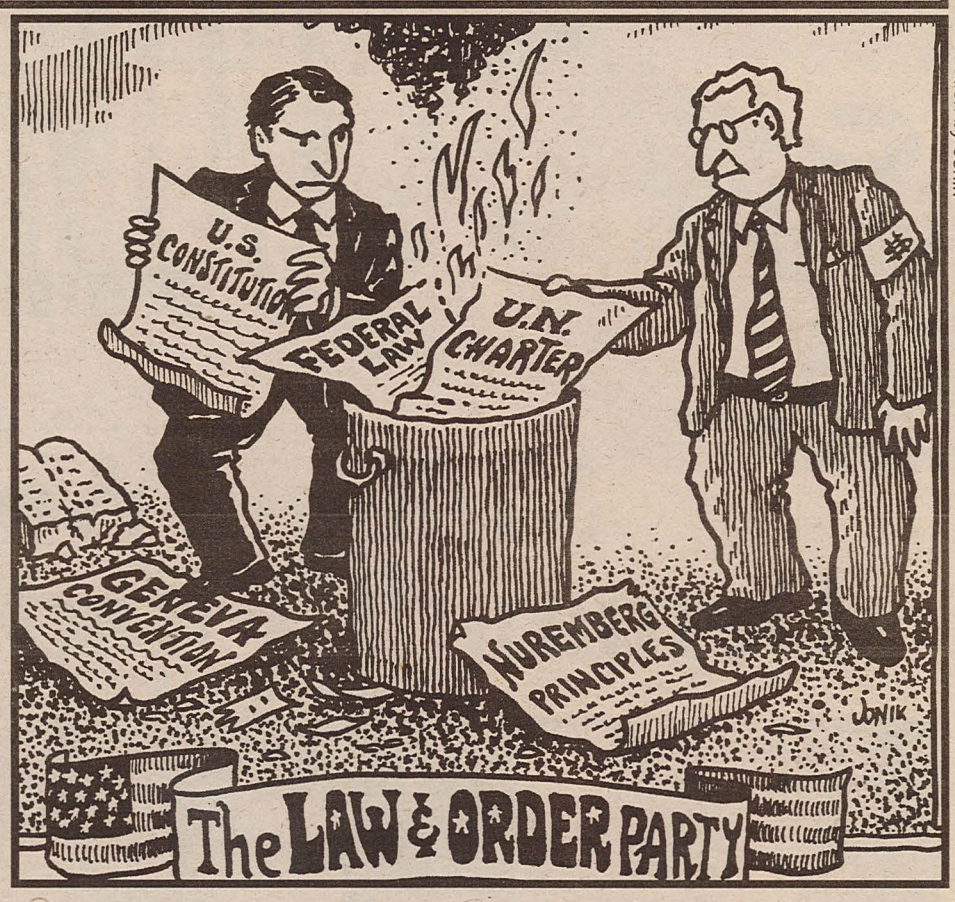

Illustration by Jonik

For the rest of us, the new year started with the newspapers crowing about the 25% decrease in the murder rate in Oakland, Chicago and other places, as if to comfort us. Yet the real terror millions of people face is under the global capitalist system, with over 40,000 humans dying daily because of famine. The real terror is getting sick and having no access to health care in the so-called health care system in this country, or losing our jobs, or defaulting on our loans and losing our homes, or getting injured on the job and being told that we are not really injured but are trying to defraud the system, etc., etc.

Fascism is a condition where the forces most hostile to the interests of the working class are in power, where business and government work hand in hand such that so-called Constitutional checks and balances do not exist to protect the nation from the dictatorial excesses of a dying capitalist class.

With the US Treasury Department owning 51% of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the Bush administration will continue to embrace fascist opportunism — reactionary intercommunalism[1] — worldwide.

Despite the outpouring of aid from the American people to the victims of the tsunami disaster in South Asia, and the US public relations response to these countries, the system of global profiteering at the

Continued on page 8

F.U.G.I.T.I.V.E.S.
Ericka Huggins

A Benefit for the Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign:
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Opinion

Oakland's War On School Children

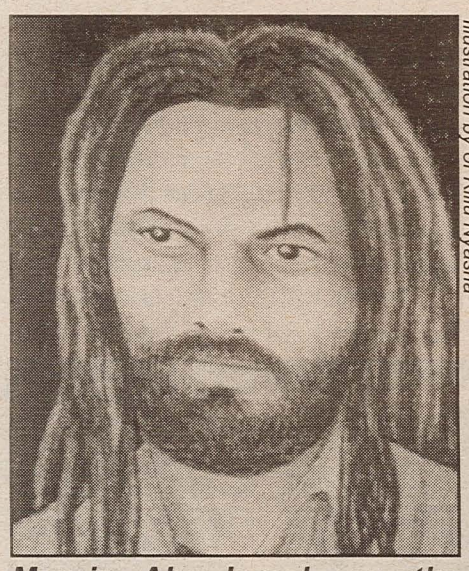

Illustration by of Kiilu Nyasha

Mumia Abu-Jamal, on the Oakland School privatizing.

Editor's note: *Mumia's case is simultaneously being heard in two different courts: the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (appellate court) and the Pennsylvania State Court of Common Pleas (trial court), both of which sit in Philadelphia.*

More immediately, Robert R. Bryan, (Mumia's lead attorney), plans to file a motion for remand to the district court on the issues raised by Terri Maurer-Carter's affidavit. Terri Maurer-Carter is the court reporter who overheard judge Albert Sabo, who presided over Mumia's 1982 "trial," and 1995, 1996 and 1997 Post-Conviction Relief Act appellate hearings in Philadelphia, say: "Yeah, and I'm going to help 'em [the prosecution] fry the nigger."

Several years ago, the great activist and prison abolitionist, Angela Davis, told me that California prison guards make more money than the state's college professors.

I was dumbfounded. But it told me all I wanted to know about how the State values its places of repression and devalues places of education.

I thought of that conversation when I heard about the latest 'financial crisis' facing the Oakland Unified School District, the state's takeover by an undemocratic agency, and the subsequent threats of cuts, of cutbacks and the ever-present lure of charter schools.

Oakland is far more than the city that gave birth to the Black Panther Party; it is far more than the popular projection of a poor city.

Oakland's Port is the fourth largest in the nation. That port generates some $27 billion annually in trade. It is home to the American President Lines (APL), the fifth largest shipping company in the country.

American business powerhouses like the Clorox Co. and Rolls-Royce Engines Services call Oakland home. Golden West Financial/World Savings is located in Oakland. It has assets of over $68 billion. Its profits in 2003 were over $900 million. Clorox, by the way, did over $4 billion in sales, netting some $320 million in profits last year.

There's a very good reason why *Forbes* Magazine ranked Oakland as

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Oakland Education Association Writes to Clorox CEO

Mr. Gerald Johnston, CEO
The Clorox Company
1221 Broadway
Oakland 94612

Dear Mr. Johnston:

My name is Ben Visnick, President of the Oakland Education Association (OEA). Please find my résumé attached.

I'm writing on behalf of our 3,500 unit members (teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses, psychologists, speech pathologists and substitutes) employed in the Oakland Public Schools.

Under State control, the Oakland school district is pursuing policies which are further destabilizing our beleaguered workforce. More teachers are avoiding Oakland as a career choice and good educators are leaving the city.

Most schools are dirtier on the inside and many have gone without heat this winter due to cutbacks in classified staff. Librarians and counselors are being reduced while our students are in greater need of these essential services. Unregulated charter schools are seen as a panacea while university reports document their failures.

As the sage Rabbi Hillel said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If

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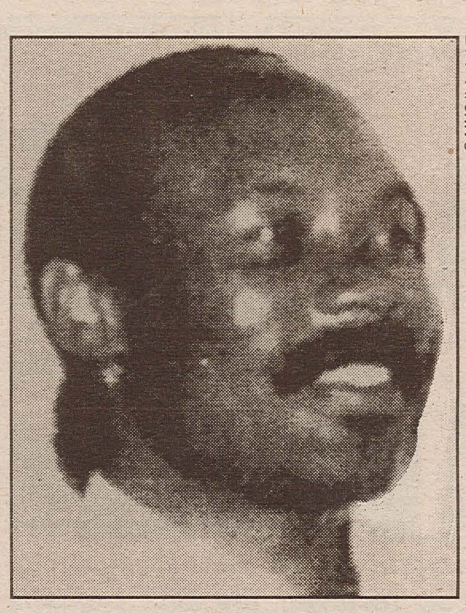
Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald



BPP Archive

Romaine Fitzgerald, framed in 1969 by FBI COINTELPRO.

In 1969 the Black Panther Party was under assault. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had announced to America that 1969 would be the last year of the Panther. Brothers and sisters were being arrested every day in LA, Chicago, New York, Oakland and San Francisco. By the end of the year, Fred Hampton would be assassinated in Chicago and the LA Chapter would be reeling from the full brunt of massive police assaults, including one that came to be known as "mini-Vietnam".

Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald was a member of the Southern California (Los Angeles) chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1969, when he was charged with and convicted of murder, a crime he denies committing to this day. He's been imprisoned for 36 years in numerous correctional facilities across the state despite all the questions, inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the case against him. Chip was a teenager when he went to prison and has now spent more time locked up than out on the streets. This makes Chip Fitzgerald the longest held Black Panther Political Prisoner in the US Prison System. He will be up for parole again in August 2005, and needs the support of *Commemorator* readers to finally set him free.

Parole authorities have denied all previous release requests. Years ago, the justification for keeping him incarcerated was that Chip did not show sufficient remorse for his crime, and that he remained a danger to society. However, over the decades, Chip has conducted himself as a "model prisoner". Indeed, his prison record contains no acts of criminal and/or violent behavior.

So now the authorities have changed their tactics. At his last parole hearing, in August 2004, the Board of Prison Terms seemed focused on technicalities. The conditions they established for his release were that he have a place to live and a job lined up. They had been met; however, the Fitzgerald family had not informed the Board of this via formal letter. Mel Mason, President of the Monterey Peninsula Branch of the NAACP, which advocates on Chip's behalf, said, "he's had a stroke and major back surgery and is partially disabled and no paperwork had been filed about his care outside. He still has a slight paralysis on his left side and walks with a cane. They could have delayed the hearing to get these matters in order but they did not."

"This is about who Chip is," continued Mason. "That he was a Black Panther continues to be a problem for the system. This is absolutely political. He's been inside for 36 years — the rule of law states that people sentenced to 'Life with Parole' must be given a release date. If he was anyone else, he'd have been out a long time ago. He should never have been incarcerated, and he meets the requirements for release."

On July 7, 2004, Mason wrote to Governor Schwarzenegger, reminding him that the Board of Prison Terms was ignoring a 2002 court ruling that parole authorities have unlimited dis-

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Intercommunal News

Northern California Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Salutes Black Labor

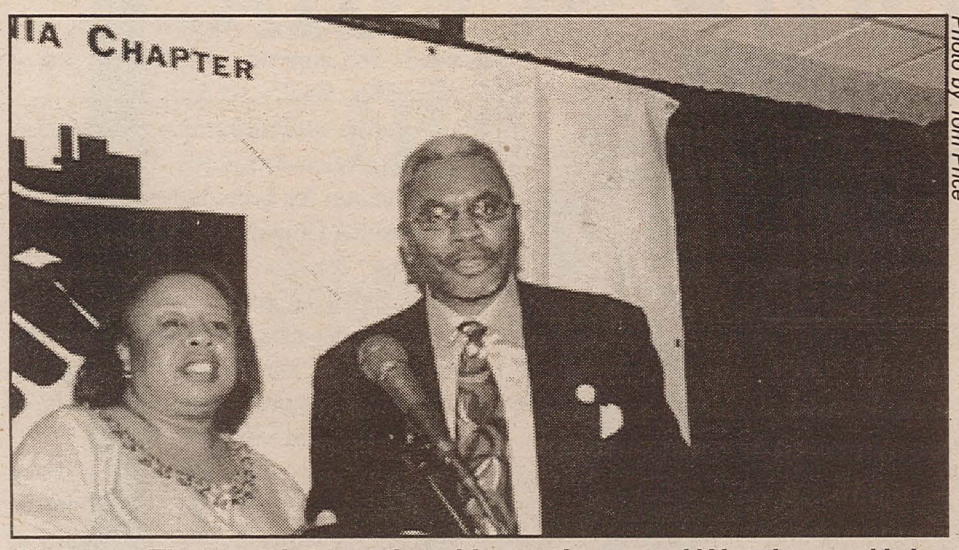

Photo by Tom Price

Clarence Thomas, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board member, received the C.L. Dellums Award from Damita Davis-Howard, Secretary of SEIU Local 535

Editor's Note: *Northern California Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) saluted Black Labor on February 4, 2005 at the Holiday Inn in Emeryville, California. The program included a reception, dinner, and awards, comments and presentations. Among those who attended were Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, International Black Trade Unionist Antonio Christian, International Vice President, Director, Civil Rights and Community Relations, United Food and Commercial Workers Mary Finger, and others labor, civil and human rights leaders and rank and file workers.*

The program began with the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice And Sing." Among the honorees was brother Clarence Thomas, executive board member of the International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU), Local 10 whose speech follows this editor's note. Brother Thomas received the C.L. Dellums Award. ILWU represents 10,500 dock workers on the Pacific Coast in 29 ports, from Seattle to San Diego.

C.L. Dellums, a militant labor organizer from Oakland, California, was a founding member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, who made the famous quote, "Fight or be slaves!"

Brother Thomas and other officers in ILWU Local 10 took the initiative to launch the Million Worker March at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC on October 17, 2004. (See page one interview with Trent Willis)

Photo by Tom Price.

Ruth Forney, formerly District 5 supervisor on the Solano County Board of Supervisors, and president of the Service Employees International Union, Local 1280, received the Miranda Smith Award. To her left is Mary Finger, International Vice President and Director of the union's Civil Rights and Community Relations Department.

Fight or be Slaves!

Speech by Clarence Thomas

"I would like to first thank the Northern California chapter of the CBTU for selecting me as this year's recipient of the C.L. Dellums award. I am honored and humbled by this recognition.

I also want to acknowledge my Union, ILWU Local 10, for providing a history of strong leadership in the trade union movement in the fight for economic and social justice for working people all over the world.

I need to mention the name of Harry Bridges when I speak of the legacy of the ILWU. While not an African American, Harry was a fighter for racial justice and working class unity.

During the 1934 West Coast dock worker strike, Harry went to Black churches and appealed to the congregations to join the dock workers on the picket lines and promised that Black workers would work on every dock on the West Coast following the strike, a promise that was carried out. Bridges knew that discrimination was a tool of the bosses.

In 1942, from *The Dispatcher*'s 'On the Beam' column, Bridges called for an end to discrimination against blacks and women. He was among the first in the labor movement to condemn the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. And in the early '60s, he was strongly critical of the government's lackluster investigation into the bombing of black churches and the deaths of civil rights activists in the South.

I would also like to acknowledge my mother Charlene Thomas, who inspired my activism. She was a member of the Negro Women Democratic Club in the '50's and the early '60s, a time when been such a member was considered subversive by the FBI.

'Fight or be Slaves!' These were the words of our brother C.L. Dellums, a leader, vice president and, later on, became president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a leader of the March on Washington Movement (MWM) that was initiated by African American workers and leaders like A. Philip Randolph. The March on Washington Movement in the 1940's was the launching point of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s. In fact, one of the members and organizers of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the March on Washington Movement, E.D. Nixon, was a major organizer of the 1955 Montgomery, Alabama Bus Boycott centered on Sister Rosa Parks and led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

C.L. Dellums and other Black workers like Miranda Smith of the Tobacco Workers union in Winston-Salem, North Carolina were some of the many pioneers in advancing the cause of all workers and fighters for African-American democracy as the two essential struggles of their time to improve the conditions of life for all working and oppressed peoples.

The fact that awards are given in the name of African-American trade unionists like C.L. Dellums and Miranda Smith is a testament to the importance of the role Black workers have played in the labor movement. The brutal attacks on labor during the past several decades under both democratic and Republican administrations demands that the labor movement have more fighters in the tradition of C.L. Dellums.

We call upon everyone here to join the Million Worker Movement in reclaiming May Day as the day of the international workers' movement and to call an international action around the list of demands set forth by the Million Worker March. We are reclaiming May Day on May first.

Lastly, we must have a fight back strategy for all workers. Join us on March 19th for a labor-speak-out rally against the war, at Mission High School, at 18th and Dolores Street in San Francisco, at 10:30 a.m."

All Power to the People

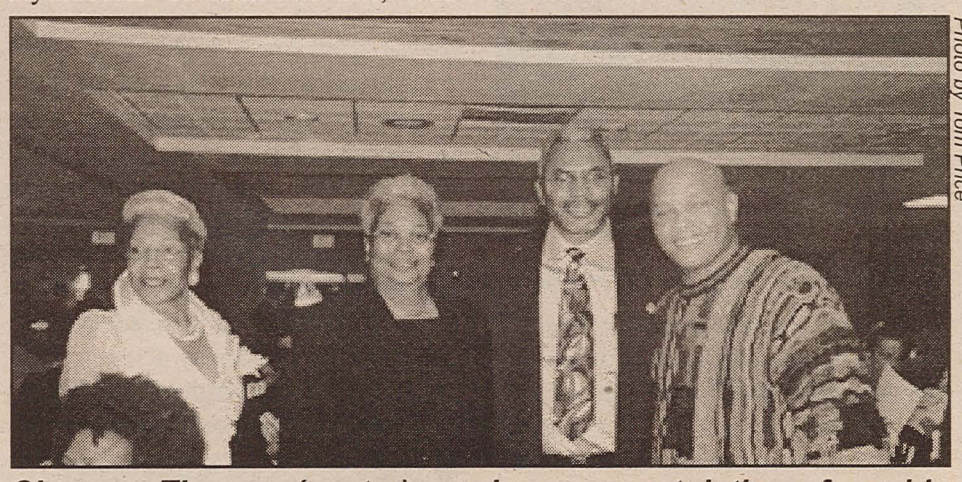

Photo by Tom Price

Clarence Thomas (center) receives congratulations from his mother Charlene Thomas (immediate left) and from Willie Adams, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer (right):

Stanley "Tookie" Williams

San Quentin Death Row Prisoner and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee

By Barbara Becnel,
Executive Director of Neighbor House

On February 2, 2005, 15 of 24 judges of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that San Quentin death row prisoner and reformed gang member, Stanley "Tookie" Williams, would not receive a hearing to re-examine the issues in his case. Mr. Williams has been on death row since 1981, though he has claimed his innocence for nearly 25 years.

Mr. Williams is an exceptional San Quentin death row prisoner who has been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize and four times for the Nobel Prize in Literature for his gang prevention work. He has written nine anti-violence books for children and has received more than 50,000 emails from youth, parents, teachers, librarians and law enforcement officials stating that Mr. Williams' work has saved the lives of thousands of youth across the nation and around the world.

Nevertheless, Mr. Williams' February 2, 2005, ruling could lead to his execution in just a few months —

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Intercommunal News

Voting Rights For All!

Kicks off Campaign in Northern California

A right to vote is like a right to a living income, a right to universal healthcare, a right to a jury of one's peers, and a right to education that teaches one how to think, not what to think...

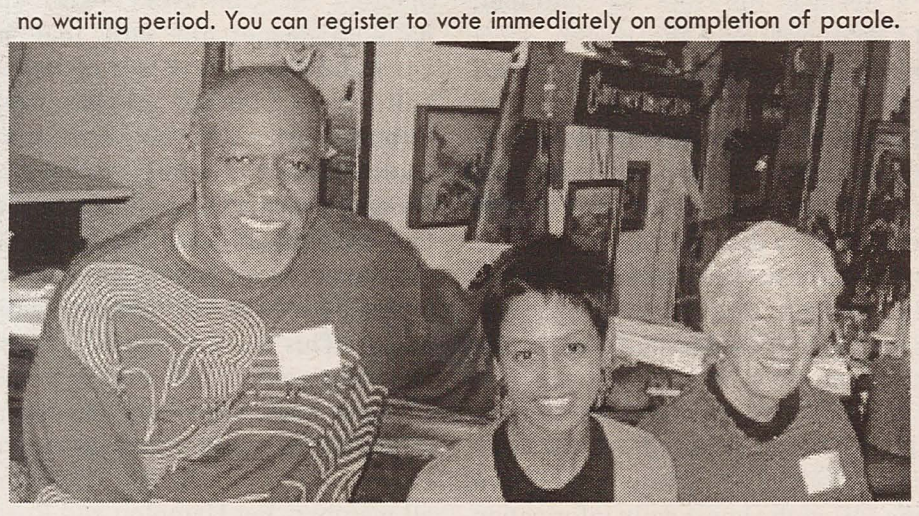
* This means that: if you are convicted of a misdemeanor, **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE** even while you are on probation or in jail. There are no restrictions on your right to vote.

* If you have been charged with a felony but have not yet been convicted, **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE.**

* If you are convicted of a felony and put on probation, **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE** while you are on probation. There are no restrictions on your right to vote.

* If you are convicted of a felony and sent to prison, you cannot vote while you are incarcerated or while you are on parole. Once you have completed parole, your voting rights are restored and **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE** in all local, state,and national elections. There is no waiting period. You can register to vote immediately on completion of parole.

Sponsored by Voting Rights for All!



***David Hilliard, founding member of The Black Panther Party (BPP), Maya Harris, American Civil Liberties Union, and Judy Grether of the Wellstone Democratic Club, lead the campaign of* Voting Rights For All!**

February 17, 2005

Disenfranchisement: News/Updates

Sen. Hillary Clinton will introduce legislation today to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to provide for election reforms in light of problems identified in voting over the past several years. One section of the bill, Civic Participation by Ex-Offenders, would provide for voting in federal elections for people with felony convictions who have completed their sentence, even if prohibited from voting in state elections. The provision would apply to the 14 states in which some or all persons convicted of a felony are disenfranchised even after completion of sentence. The bill is being co-sponsored by Senators Boxer, Kerry, and Lautenberg, with a companion bill being introduced in the House by Rep. Stephanie Tubbs-Jones.

Oklahoma: Reform Legislation The Associated Press reports on Oklahoma Senate Bill 662, which would have permitted persons currently under probation or parole supervision to petition to have their voting rights restored. The article profiles Dolores Beeler, who is a member of the League of Women Voters, but cannot vote because of a sentence for a drug conviction. [Note: The article erroneously states that the bill, which was defeated in committee, would have granted voting rights upon completion of supervision.]

Rights Restoration: New Study Coverage of The Sentencing Project's new report, *Barred for Life: Voting Rights Restoration in Permanent Disenfranchisement States*, is featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Boston Globe*. The report found that the process of rights restoration is cumbersome and little used in most of the 14 states that disenfranchise some or all persons after completion of a felony sentence.

Florida: Editorial Reform: The St. Petersburg Times continues a series of editorials by Florida newspapers supporting reform of the state's disenfranchisement laws, agreeing with the American Correctional Association that states should automatically restore voting rights after completion of sentence. The paper argues that the state would save millions of dollars that are currently used updating and maintaining electoral databases and "would correct the current system's biggest problem: It punishes felons long after their sentences are completed."

Debate: "Should N.Y. Felons Vote?" The New York Daily News features a debate on whether people in prison or on parole should have voting rights. Patrick Lynch of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association states that "you don't deserve to enjoy individual rights if you deny them to others." Joseph Hayden of Demos counters that the denial of the right to vote "is neither part of the criminal sentence nor does it serve any legitimate goal of punishment or public safety."

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Fred Hampton, Jr. Visits Bay Area

Commemorator photo

Fred Hampton, Jr. (L) speaks with children during a youth activity where the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Session is held weekly.

By Constance D. James

This month the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign was fortunate to have Fred Hampton, Jr., son of the slain Black Panther leader (Deputy Chairman) Fred Hampton of Chicago, visit and speak about the history of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party. During the days of the Black Panther Party, Chicago had the largest survival program in the nation; the Breakfast Program fed more than 3,000 children a week. Fred Jr. also spoke about the circumstances around the death of his father, Fred Sr., who was only 21 years old when the FBI murdered him. At the time of his murder, his wife, Akua Njeri, was pregnant with Fred Jr.

Fred Hampton, Jr. spoke to the students and parents during the youth activities session at the South Berkeley Community Church. Some of the parents remembered when Fred Sr. was alive, and some of them even remembered the survival programs right here in Oakland. The students shared their thoughts and one even shared a poem with Fred Jr.

It was inspiring to have the son of a great leader visit the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, sponsored by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party. Fred Jr. is an inspiration to us all. Fred Jr. has been organizing in Chicago for over 15 years, 9 of which were spent serving time for a crime he didn't commit. He is currently the Chairman of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC), where he is working to free all political prisoners in the United States. Following in his father's footsteps, Chairman Fred is an inspiration to us all.

All Power to the People!

Bush's Social Security Plan Attacks Low-Income Citizens

By Eric Theis and CCBPP Staff

As could have been forecasted, the veil of privatization is swooping over yet one more corner of what the government had previously staked out as its responsibility toward this country's social services as President Bush pushes for a new plan by which the federal government would allow workers to put a portion of their Social Security program taxes into private investments, such that the Social Security monies would go to the private sector to shore up the stock market while parading as offering workers more options.

Currently the Social Security system provides what the government refers to as a "safety net" for workers in this country who have no pension or other form of retirement benefits or to augment those benefits workers are getting from their jobs. It is a "safety net" we all pay for throughout our working lives as the government takes our money in social security taxes as an interest-free loan, stating that it will give it back upon our retirement in the form of a monthly payment. The program was designed by the Roosevelt administration during the Great Depression as a way to keep workers from rising up in the face of a system that left them starving with nowhere to turn. The program provides barely enough to sustain senior citizens.

"Trust fund dollars should not be used to promote a political agenda," said Dana C. Duggins, a vice president of the Social Security Council of the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents more than 50,000 of the agency's 64,000 workers and has opposed private accounts.

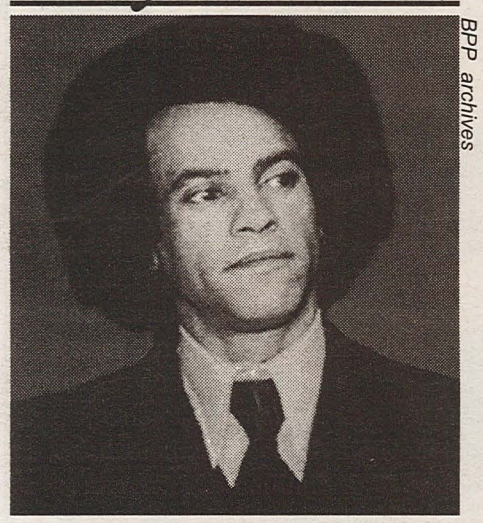
Continued on page 15

Archives

FBI Created Discord Between the BPP and Other Black Groups:

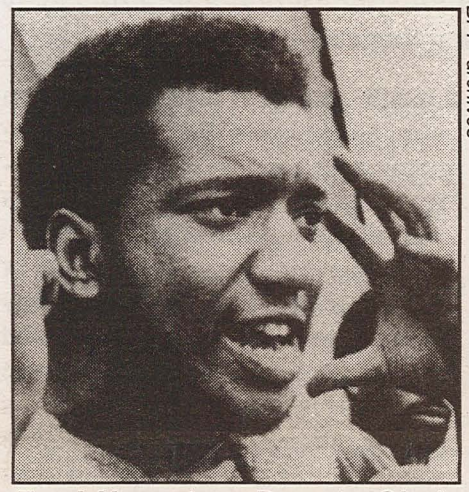
Murder and Mayhem from Chicago to California

Huey's Corner



BPP archives

Dr. Huey P. Newton



BPP archives

Fred Hampton, Deputy Chair, Illinois Chapter of BPP

Editor's Note: *The following article by Dr. Huey P. Newton was taken from the 1977 PhD. Dissertation for on the history of Consciousness. The thesis was published by the Huey P. Newton Foundation in a book called The War Against the Panthers: A study of Oppression in America (Writer and Readers, 1999), and is available at your local bookstore.*

The Chicago office of the FBI, under the direction of Marlin Johnson, responded energetically to the COINTELPRO directions from headquarters. Soon after receipt of the memorandum instructing "recipient offices…to submit imaginative and hard-hitting counter-intelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP,"[87] they began sending letters to the leadership of a Chicago street gang called the Blackstone Rangers, or P-Stone Nation, telling them that the Panthers wanted to take away their territory. [88] By December of 1968, this activity had escalated. The Chicago office reported in a memorandum to Headquarters that Jeff Fort, the head of the Rangers, had said that he would "take care of" anyone saying bad things about him. Chicago recommended that the Bureau write Fort an anonymous letter saying that several Panthers were spreading rumors about him. [89]

By January 1969, the FBI's tactics became more straightforward. The Chicago office suggested sending Fort a letter telling him that there was a "hit" out for him from the Panthers [90] This effort the FBI hoped would occasion Fort to take retaliatory action which would disrupt the BPP or lead to reprisals against its leadership. Fred Hampton was then the head of the Chicago office of the Panthers. The memorandum explained why a similar letter was not being sent to the Panthers:

Consideration has been given to a similar letter to the BPP, alleging a Ranger plot against the BPP leadership; however, it is not felt this would be productive, principally since the BPP at present is not believed as violence-prone as the Rangers, to whom violent type activity—shooting, and the like—is second nature. [91]

The Bureau's own internal memoranda make it clear that, whatever their public rhetoric, their goal was to promote, rather than prevent, violence. Fred Hampton became a prime target for this FBI-directed violence.

Hampton was only 18 when he became head of the Illinois chapter of the Panthers. He was an extraordinary leader — a brilliant and charismatic speaker with an exceptional ability to deal with people and inspire confidence. His energy led the Chicago chapter of the Panthers to be one of the most effective. Five different breakfast programs were begun on Chicago's West Side, and a free medical center was begun in a neighborhood which had an infant mortality rate more than twice that of White Chicago. Under his direction, the Party also began a door-to-door program of health care, which included testing for sickle cell anemia, and blood drives for Cook Country Hospital, which served much of the Black community. During the winter, the Party organized an emergency heat program, which kept pressure on the landlords to repair furnaces and boilers. The community was beginning to deal with its problems and an atmosphere of optimism and commitment was growing.[92]

Hampton was relentless; he could be found bustling around the Panther headquarters, out in the streets talking to and organizing people, or at one of an increasing number of speaking engagements throughout the Midwest. By the summer of 1969, he was talking to thousands of people in the course of a month. He was becoming a national figure both inside and outside the Party, and it was being suggested that he be brought into the national BPP leadership.

On March 4, 1968, the Chicago office of the FBI received a memorandum advising them to keep close track of those Black leaders on the "Rabble Rouser Index" who might be future targets of the COINTELPRO. [93] On March 7, 1968, an Airtel was sent back to Headquarters from Chicago stating that Fred Hampton was "in the R.R.I. Sources assigned. Liaison being maintained with Maywood Police Department." [94]

The FBI assigned an informer to Hampton. The Chicago office sent many memoranda to Headquarters on him and his travel was closely watched. By September, Headquarters was pressing for intensified investigations into the leadership of the Party and, by that time, Hampton was being listed in FBI memoranda as one of the BPP's leadership.

In response, the Bureau introduced a new informer into the Panther leadership—William O'Neal, who had joined the Panthers in late 1968, after being asked to do so by FBI Special Agent Roy Martin Mitchell. [95] Besides his role as informer, O'Neal was also the classic *agent provocateur*. He at one point devised an outrageous plan to blow up City Hall, but was soon told to forget it by the Panther leadership. His most infamous invention, which was almost immediately dismantled, was a homemade electric chair which he, ironically enough, planned to use to interrogate possible infiltrators into the party. [96]

During the period from 1969 to 1970, O'Neal received over $17,000 from the FBI. In return he provided the FBI with almost daily information concerning the activities and, in particular, the leadership of the Party. He became Chief of Security for the BPP and in February of 1969, O'Neal became Hampton's personal bodyguard. That same month, Mitchell wrote a memorandum asking the Bureau to raise O'Neal's pay from $300 to $600 a month. [97] And O'Neal was not alone; he was only one of several informers which the FBI had planted in the BPP.

O'Neal's role became more prominent as the FBI became more and more aggressive in its activities against the BPP. In June of 1969, O'Neal's reports were used as an excuse for a raid on the Panther office in Chicago. [98] Under the pretext of looking for a fugitive, the police surrounded the office, almost causing a shootout. The fugitive—who later turned out to be an FBI informer—was not found, but several Panthers were arrested and the office ransacked.

In mid-November, FBI Agent Mitchell and informer O'Neal met. [99] O'Neal told Mitchell that Hampton had just returned from a meeting in California, with the national leadership and that he would become BPP Chief of staff if Hilliard went to jail. O'Neal also informed Mitchell that Hampton's court date was coming up and that Hampton seemed to be implying that he would not go to jail again and that the party would have to survive without his being around on a daily basis. This was an indication that Hampton might go underground. O'Neal also reported that there might be a drastic purge in the Panther Party in Chicago, expelling all members but Hampton and Rush. Any one of these factors might have given the Bureau a sense of urgency in moving against Hampton. And the recent killing of two police officers by Black people may have led the FBI to believe it could now get the police to do what it had failed to get the Rangers to do. [100]

Mitchell apparently asked O'Neal to get him the floor plan for the apartment where Fred was living because when the two met again on November 9, Mitchell sketched out a diagram from O'Neal's description of the

Continued on page 17

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Letters to the Editor

What the People Need to Know

Dear Editor.

In the October, 2004 issue of *The Commemorator,* you published my letter that stated all prisoners serving life terms in California state prisons have a statutory right to a Parole Release Date pursuant to Cal. Penal Code (CPC) 1170.2(b) and (e), PC 3065 and PC 3041(c). What the people now need to know is "how" the Governor, Attorney General and Board of Prison Terms hoodwinked the public into believing that prisoners serving life terms did not have a right to Release Dates.

After ex-cop Dan White shot and killed the Mayor of San Francisco and a gay supervisor named Harvey Milk, politicians in Sacramento claimed that the penalty for murder should be increased. So when former Senator Briggs told the voters that Proposition 7 would keep guys like Dan White in prison longer, they passed it at the 1979 election. The proposition did increase the penalty for murder; but it also gave the legislators an opportunity to create a special statute to amend the general term-fixing provisions of the above–mentioned Determinate Sentence Law (DSL) statutes.

The special statute that was bought and paid for by lobbyists of the Cal. Department of Corrections is now subdivision (b) of PC 3041. According to article 4, section 16(b) of the Cal. Constitution, "local" or "special" statutes are invalid, if a general statute can be made applicable. The special statute states that the BPT can deny parole based solely on the seriousness of a crime. However, subdivision (b) of CPC 1170.2 states that a release date shall be set based on the circumstances and seriousness of a crime.

[In other words, the Board of Prison Terms, a non-elected body not accountable to anyone, has been given arbitrary power to extend a person's sentence indefinitely – Ed.]

Because the special statute is not consistent with the term-fixing mandate of the general statute, or PC 1170.2, it is invalid under Article 4, Section 16(b) of the Cal. Constitution.

For more than 20 years the Governor, Attorney General and Board of Prison Terms have used the media and an invalid special statute to trick the public into believing that the Determinate Sentencing Law does not apply to lifers because they were sentenced pursuant to PC 1168 of the indeterminate sentence law (ISL). What these elected and appointed politicians have failed to advise the courts is that the Determinate Sentence law, or subdivision (e) of 1170.2 specifically states that the "release from prison" provision of the code applies to prisoners sentenced under PC 1168 prior to and after July 1, 1977. Because the Determinate Sentence Law can be made applicable to prisoners' sentences pursuant to 1168, any special or amended statute would violate Article 4, section 16(b) of the California Constitution if applied to prisoners sentenced to life with the possibility of parole.

Years ago I met Huey Newton in prison. Despite some of his shortcomings he impressed me as being a very intelligent brother who learned how to defend himself legally. Huey was not alone. Tupac's mother was an expert paralegal. And if Fred Hampton's wife had not forced the state to do a ballistics test on the bullet removed from a cop's leg after Fred and Mark Clark were murdered during a police raid of their apartment, the people would have never known that two innocent Black men were shot to death while they were asleep in bed.

All prisoners serving life terms have been hoodwinked into believing they don't have a right to a PC 1170.2 Determinate Sentence Law release date. Now they have an obligation to themselves and the people interested in them to access the legal systems and file *habeas corpus* writs in the Superior courts — demanding their PC 1170.2 Determinate Sentence Law release dates. In 1980 a prisoner named William Johnson did just that. The Board of Prison Terms was ordered to immediately release him without parole!! The case cited is, In Re Johnson, 166 Cal. Rptr. 84.

Let there be a function at the junction!

Sincerely,
Colvin McCright, a.k.a MUNDY

P.S.

Not long ago Sara J. Olsen was taken to a so-called "serious offender hearing" where the Board of Prison Terms extended her term five years. These so-called hearings are supposed to only apply to prisoners serving indeterminate life terms.

Jonik

Therefore, the Board of Prison Terms does not have the authority or jurisdiction to extend her determinate term of 5 years, 4 months, unless she commits a violation of Cal. Code of Regulations 3323(b) Division A-1 rules while in prison. If that occurs, the Board of Prison Terms still can only extend a determinate term of one year.

Some years ago, the Board tried to do the same thing in the case of *Terhune v. Superior Court*, 76 Cal. Rptr. 2d. 841. The court ruled that once a prisoner has served a determinate term, the BPT has no discretion to grant or withhold parole under the mandatory "kick out" provisions of the governing statute. Cal. Pen. Code 3000(a).

It is my belief that state-appointed lawyers are not advising prisoners of their rights. This may be what's happening to Sara. It certainly was the case with me! Sara's case is very political. In 2001, PC 3000 was amended to permit the BPT to extend indeterminate terms for five years. But as I said before, the law only applies to indeterminate terms. Sara's felony was committed in the '70's. If the state applies the 2001 version of PC 3000 to a case that occurred in the '70's, it would violate the *ex post facto* laws prohibited in Article I, Section 9 of the Federal Constitution and Article I, Section 26 of the California Constitution. *["ex post facto" means making a law retroactive, so that a person who violated the law before it became a law would still be prosecuted for breaking it. — Ed.]*

Well my friend, that's a wrap.
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Letters to the Editor

Letter to Clorox

Continued from page 3

not now, when?" Therefore, we wish to discuss your participation in a business consortium to immediately pay off the $60 million plus school district debt to the state, thereby restoring local control and democracy. We also want to discuss your public endorsement of local and state legislation to place higher taxes on corporations to support public education. Increased corporate payments to sustain Oakland's schools would offer teaching and learning conditions that assure the greatest education quality to all of Oakland's youth. Enclosed for your review is OEA's plan to support our neediest students.

As major developers and employers in Oakland, and therefore, as major beneficiaries of Oakland's productivity, you bear a special responsibility to the city's hard-working people. They have a strong interest, as we hope you do, in making sure that all of our youth are well-educated and equipped with the skills to deal with the rapid growth in technology and the myriad local opportunities for trade. With the vast wealth available to your respective corporations, and the high rate of profitability you maintain, immediately helping to pay off the school district debt would pose little problem for you, while it would greatly benefit Oakland's students.

In convening this meeting, we would urge you to invite representatives of any and all other corporations you see fit. We would suggest that representatives of the Port of Oakland attend as well as Kaiser Permanente and Health Net, the former to discuss helping pay off the debt, the latter to relieve health care-cost pressures on the Oakland United School District. As public utilities providing critical, but costly, services, Southern Bell Corporation (SBC), PG&E and East Bay Municipal Utility District might be invited to attend as well.

To plan this endeavor, we would suggest any date in February, Black History Month. Nothing would be a greater tribute to Dr. King's struggle for a color-blind society offering genuine and equal opportunity to all, than for corporate Oakland to step up and meet its responsibilities to our youth.

Thank you for your serious attention to this matter. Please RSVP at (510) 763-4020, x15.

Sincerely,

Ben Visnick, OEA President

Attach:
cc: Randolph Ward, OUSD
State Administrator
OUSD School Board
OEA Executive Board
Don Perata, SD #9
Wilma Chan, AD #16
Barbara Lee, CD #9
Jerry Brown, Mayor

Election Aftermath

Continued from page 2

expense of workers and poor countries, where labor can be found the cheapest, creates competition between workers in the United States and our destitute brothers and sisters in the developing world. Through globalization, the reactionary intercommunalists are forcing all of us to work for less and less, to compete for scarce jobs by working for less money than most of us had even imagined.

We, who must work to survive, are now dependent on their low-paying jobs, deteriorating and overpriced public transportation system, and must send our children to mis-educating schools.

Our public schools, healthcare system and housing have been gutted — left destitute at the hands of monopoly capitalists. On the other hand, members of both houses approved a $388 billion government military spending bill. That does not include the more than $250 billion already spent on the destruction of Iraq and the murder of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children and guaranteeing that the United States will be the most hated nation on earth for decades to come.

As Dr. Huey P. Newton laid out 35 years ago, Revolutionary Intercommunalism must become the order of the day through eliminating the Reactionary Intercommunal conditions that we face. We must organize with all our abilities, resources and the science of successful struggle to build a world where poverty does not exist, a world where the Haves and the Have-nots do not exist, to build a world where monopoly capitalism is no longer in power.

"We cannot afford to wait for the proletariat to become the lumpenproletarian to educate him." **Dr. Huey P. Newton, *Boston College Speech, 1971***

"The qualitative leap from reactionary intercommunalism to revolutionary intercommunalism will not be the millennium. It will not immediately bring into being either a universal identity or a culture that is essentially human. It will only provide the material base for the development of those tendencies." **Dr. Huey P. Newton, Intercommunalism, February 1971, *The Huey P. Newton Reader,* pg. 197, Seven Stories Press**

With the monopoly capitalist ruling-class system on the one hand, and the working class on the other standing worlds apart, we must build solidarity among the many, the exploited and working class communities everywhere, to defeat the few, the exploiters and the oppressors. We must build organization through which we can act to disallow those that manipulate us and set us to fight amongst ourselves over petty differences while they laugh all the way to the bank. The many, exploited, and working class of the world must work together to fight harder to defeat, once and for all, the few of them — the reactionary bourgeoisie profiteering class who control the international monopoly capitalist economic system.

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[1] Reactionary intercommunalism is described in CCBPP's Statement of Purpose which is printed in every issue of The Commemorator *(see page 19).*

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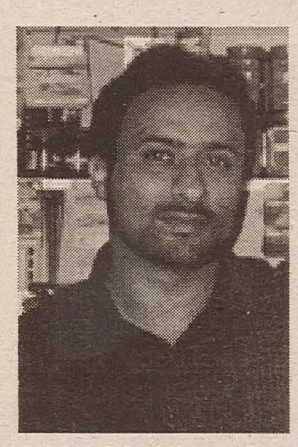

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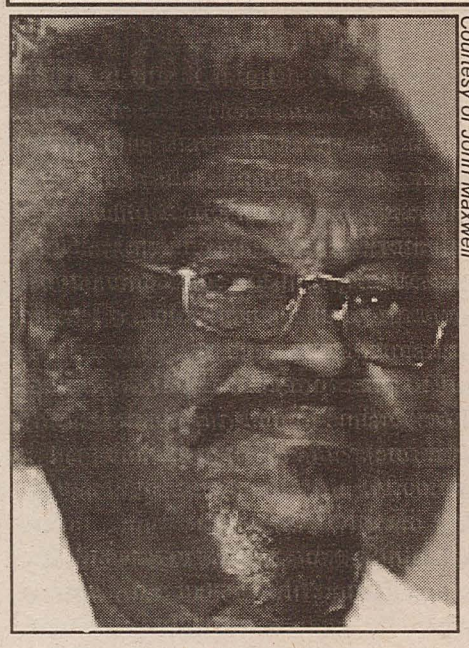
International Update

Blood on Their Hands



Courtesy of John Maxwell

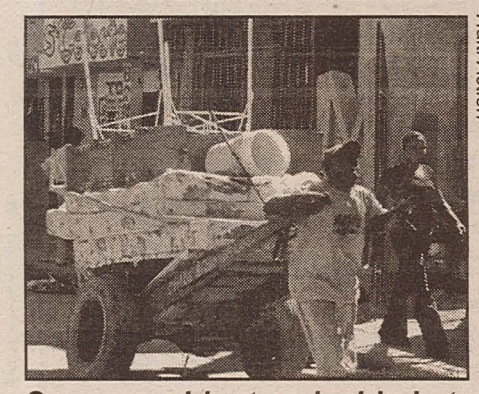
by John Maxwell

Editor's Note: *The following article by John Maxwell, a renowned Jamaican journalist, was highly recommended by a longtime activist, leader and organizer Mr. Pierre LaBossiere. Mr. LaBossiere has been a correspondent to* The Commemorator *for the past 14 years. Mr. LaBossiere has travelled to Haiti many, many times, and has kept our readership, and many Bay Area residents informed as to what is really going on in that part of the world. Maxwell's account of Haiti is quite different from the mainstream US news and the reports we get from the corporate media in general. To let the US corporate media tell the Haitian story, one would think President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Lavalas Party were the villains while the puppet regime the United States has since installed represent the "good guys."*

Sometimes I have the strange sensation that I can smell the blood of Haiti from here.

The Duvalierists, financed by the elite, protected by the United Nations "peacekeeping" mission, are methodically murdering men, women and children thought to be supporters of President Aristide, butchering them in the streets and leaving the bodies, maimed and horrific, in the streets as an example to *"les autres"* (the others)."

The others are the overwhelming multitude of Haitians who have somehow got it into their minds that Jean-Bertrand Aristide is their leader. They want him back in Haiti; to lead them out of the mire of their despair, out of their slough of despond, out of the bottomless pit of nonentity into which they have been consigned by the civilized leaders of the world: the United States, France, Canada and the European Union. For a change, the British and the Australians are not overtly involved.



Haiti Action

Some residents decided to leave Bel Air after the UN assumed control of the streets on January 5, 2005. Although the UN claims responsibility for security, the Haitian National Police (PNH) executed armed raids in poor neighborhoods where support for ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide remains strong.

But other pretenders to world class are there, the Brazilians, for instance, whose history, like Haiti's, has been blighted by US interference, dictatorship and abuse.

With intent to terrorize ...

According to Kevin Pina (www.Flashpoints.net), an American reporter living in Haiti: "after Bush's election the other night, fireworks went off in some of the wealthy areas of Petionville up in the hills. The very next day, of course, the United Nations and the Haitian police were back at it again in slums like Bel Air and Cite Soleil, in Grand Ravine and Martissant. It's been almost daily now that they enter those communities; I understand that in Bel Air now the majority of the population don't even dare venture from their homes, they're so afraid that they, or one of their loved ones, will be caught up in one of these sweeps, because most of them are Lavalas supporters and the police know that, so the sweeps are indiscriminate. Anyone in the street can get picked up and caught up in these dragnets and get put face first on the ground, and never knowing whether its going to be as it was last Tuesday, October 26th, where 13 young men were put face down on the ground and each one had a bullet pumped into the back of the head.... if you saw any of these photos, you would see that one of those young men in Bel Air last Thursday, his head was completely blown off because they fired at him with a large automatic weapon at close range, and they left the bodies in the street for the community to see. That kind of activity is clearly meant to terrorize people, it's clearly left as a calling card and a message. It's not just murders being done here, this is murder with the intent to terrorize."

According to Pina and other Haitian resistance sources, the Haitian elite, led by two implacable enemies of Aristide, Andy Apaid and Reginald Boulos, have been buying support in the slums, financing gang terror against Lavalas supporters. The result of this program, says Pina, appears in stories in the North American press saying the violence is the result of inter-gang warfare in the slums.

In a letter from his jail cell, Father Gerard Jean Juste exhorts sympathizers around the world not to be intimidated by "Hooded men, intimidation, masked gunmen, massacre, masked men attacking the churches, forced entries in our rectories, arbitrary arrests, defamation, character assassination, prison, threats of death..."

Meanwhile, as the world turns imperturbably on, there are rumors of international consultations, investigations and other bureaucratic devices, designed, sometime next year, next decade or next millennium, to stanch the flow of Haitian blood, if there is any remaining...

Of course, it's all the fault of the Haitians. It is clear — and has been for 200 years, that these one-time slaves have too high an opinion of themselves and must be put in their places. Having defeated the French, British and Spanish armies to achieve their freedom, they found themselves defeated by trade embargoes, diplomatic isolation, financial blackmail, the US Marines and their black surrogates, the Haitian Army, by the Duvaliers, father and son, the Tonton Macoute and the CIA-sponsored FRAPH, not to mention the white death of the World Bank, the IMF, the InterAmerican Development Bank and USAID.

Haiti Action

On October 21, 2004, Haitian police entered the slum of Bel Air, where a large community of Lavalas supporters reside, and shot these four young men execution style.

The Prime Minister of Canada put it succinctly the other day. On a one-day visit to Haiti two Sundays ago, Mr. Paul Martin warned the island's feuding factions, "to stop the violence, disarm and make peace, or risk being written off by the rest of the world."

Most Haitians thought they had already been written off by The Countries That Count (TCTC): France, Canada the United States and the European Union.

Who are these "feuding factions?"

Almost to a man, experienced observers of the Haitian scene have said that whatever faults they have ascribed to Aristide, he still commands the overwhelming support of the Haitian people. So, are they feuding among themselves?

It would not seem so

It would seem that the present conflict was instigated by gangsters armed and supported by the United States via the Dominican Republic, whose so-called uprising faltered before they could enter Port au Prince, having murdered Haitian policemen and burned police stations to intimidate the countryside. But they couldn't enter Port au Prince, it appears, until they were escorted in by units of the US Marines. These Marines, led by the US Ambassador, Mr. Foley, forced Aristide to sign what the Ambassador thought was a letter of resignation. The Americans then spirited the President off (as "air cargo") to another continent whence he was not expected to be able to communicate with his people nor return to his country, or perhaps, not to return at all, except in a coffin.

The recent US elections have given the world a lesson in how adept the media is in covering up unpleasant facts, so most people are totally unaware of the roles of President George Bush, the French, the Canadians, the International Financial Institutions and the Haitian elite in the coup against Aristide.

Most people do not know about the financial blackmail by the InterAmerican Development Bank, the IDB, which promised loans to Haiti to help reconstruct its health infrastructure. The IDB then refused to hand out the loans until the Haitian government repaid its earlier loans made to previous dictators. Aristide paid the usurious demand but the IDB money never came. It was blocked by the American friends of the elite and their friends in the IDB, World Bank and IMF.

Then, they said, Aristide could not govern. He was unable to restore the health system or keep any of the promises he had made, forgetting, of course, that the fulfillment of these promises depended on the funding that Haiti had been promised. Aristide, slandered as a thief and tyrant, now lives on the charity of South Africa, working at a university there.

The Canadians, the Americans and the European Union promised to help Aristide rebuild the justice system and develop a new, trustworthy police force. They, too, reneged on their pledges, and said, triumphantly, that Aristide was unable to keep order. They blamed him for the gangs which, as in Jamaica, develop when the forces of law and order disappear.

Chirac, the Righteous

A few days ago, the French President, Jacques Chirac, chided the United States for believing that it could Americanize the world by invading and occupying countries. How

Continued on page 13

Million Workers,

Continued from page 1

(ILWU) Local 10 in San Francisco, the local of Harry Bridges, famed organizer of the 1934 West Coast dock action that led to the General Strike.

COMMEMORATOR: Can you tell our readers about the Million Worker March? Where did it come from, and how did it get started?

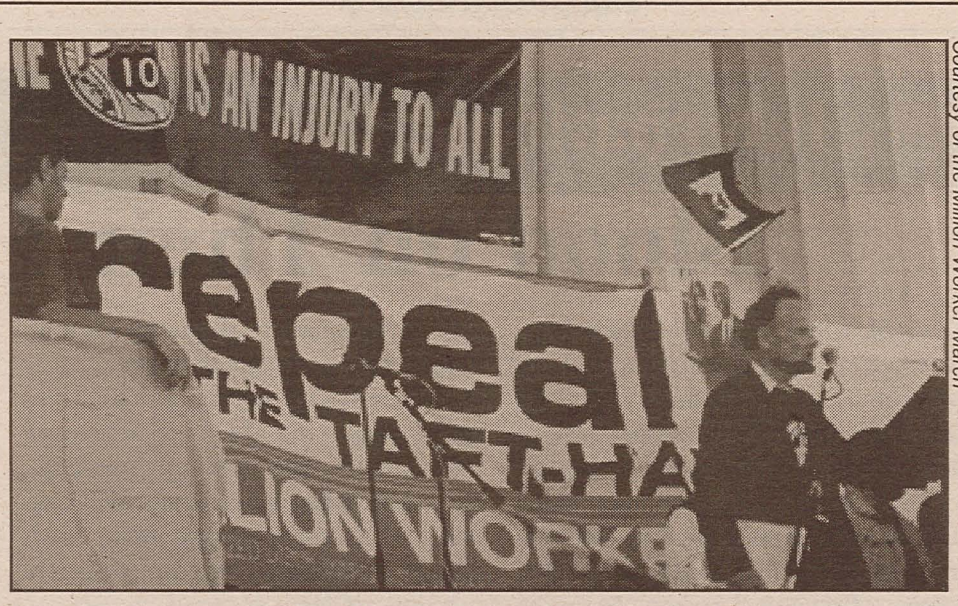
Trent: The idea of the march came from me. I was watching the Lou Dobbs Report on CNN and they were talking about the increase of the outsourcing of jobs since 9-11. They were talking about how the healthcare system is in shambles, the threats to social security and the privatization of social security. I thought to myself, it seems as though — especially with the outcome of the 2000 elections, not the most recent election but the one before — that voices in this country and other countries are not being heard. It seems to be a hostile takeover and it's been like this for a long time. That is, big business buying legislation and the majority not ruling any more. I thought that there should be some kind of expression in this country, especially from our younger people who are already the next generation of workers, to express themselves and to demand certain rights that we have already fought for.

COMMEMORATOR: What kind of response did you get from the march in Washington, D.C.? I understand that the AFL-CIO was against you organizing the March around election time.

Trent: Yes, well, I wouldn't say the AFL-CIO but more the AFL-CIO leadership. As far as the response across the country, it was very positive and actually not only in this country but overseas, where there were numerous simultaneous demonstrations done on the same day. There were 17 in Japan. It was also aired on CSPAN.

COMMEMORATOR: It sounds like you achieved some of your objectives in terms of making known that workers are concerned with more than their personal paycheck. Workers today seem to understand that there are bigger issues, such as our neighbors having enough to eat, and everybody needing health care. That's one of the things that struck me about your campaign; you seem to be focused on things like poverty and the economy in general, the cost of the war in relation to poverty, healthcare, school, and the neighborhoods. Your platform reminds me of the Ten-Point Program of the Black Panther Party. A lot of your objectives shared similar points. You are talking about health care, living-wage jobs, etc

Trent: …and educational points.

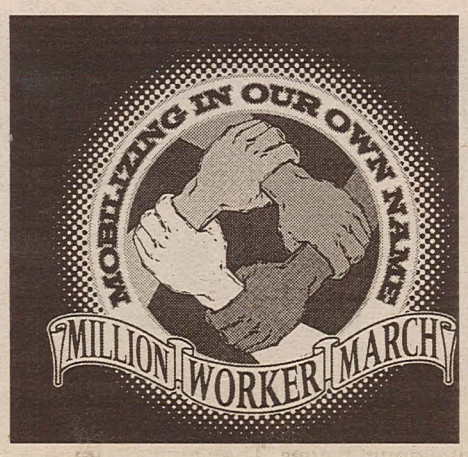


Courtesy of the Million Worker March

Chair of communication for MWM, Ralph Schoenman, in Washington, D.C., speaking at the March on October 17, 2004, with a banner reading "repeal the Taft-Hartley" behind him.

COMMEMORATOR: Right. So how do you see next year? Are you going to continue fighting for these needs of the people?

Trent: Well, we have no reason not to. I just don't want to say we are going to do another march right now, when the rest of the people involved haven't agreed upon it.



On the point you made about the objective, the objective was meant for the initial beginning of the movement, and now we've started calling it the Workers Union March because we intend to continue this movement to organize workers so that our voice in this country is louder with power. That's the only way the politicians will hear us. That's the only weapon we have to fight against all the money that is being poured into our legislature by big businesses.

COMMEMORATOR: So can you talk about where you're participating demographically?

Trent: The unique thing about the Million Worker March and the reason that it became so successful despite the obstacles in the way of the event was that the make-up was exactly the way you mentioned it. The make-up was of union workers, non-union workers and all different nationalities. If you took a look at our logo you saw a four-way clenched fist and it symbolized every nationality in that logo. The first thing you have to know about organizing is that you can't separate by race. I think that's the first principle of organizing. Everyone has to be organized around the issues, and I think that is what made the initial part of the march successful.

COMMEMORATOR: So there were people from all over the country?

Trent: Right. Rank-and-file union members, unemployed workers anti-war activists, and social justice activists, gathered at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. Workers from all over the country were represented on October 17th.

The active support and endorsement of Black and Latino worker organizations — from the coalition of Black trade unionists, the Teamsters' National Black Caucus, Black Workers for Justice, the Immigrant Rights Association, and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee brought to the fore of the Million Worker March the most oppressed sectors of the work force.

COMMEMORATOR: So what were some of the concerns people brought you?

Trent: Well, mainly people talked about one of the hot topics: healthcare. As you know that is one of our demands. We have a whole listing of demands…

The other hot topic was the military budget because people in this country are starting to understand that this military budget has a direct effect on the workers here. When you talk about the military budget, you talk about all the money that is being sent to wage a war for who-knows-what. That money is being taken from our social programs here that is so badly needed in the community like right here in Berkeley, California where schools are being closed, jobs are scarce, and people are poor. This is where the services are needed the most in areas like this, and the money that is supposed to be used to provide these services is going to [the war in] Iraq. That's what people need to understand.

COMMEMORATOR: That is point number eight of the BPP Ten-Point Program: We want an immediate end to all wars of aggression.

So, now the march has ended, how will you incorporate into your campaign the various elements of the community such as the schools, youth, the religious community, and the homeless population, including ex-felons, to advance your platform? Do you have some thoughts on that?

Trent: Well some of the things that you mentioned are in the works of being organized as we speak. We've been holding bi-weekly meetings in San Francisco on Sundays at 5:30, at

Continued on next page

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the union hall. Our most recent discussions have been merged with the US Labor Against The War (USLAW) organization, and we're planning this major event set for March 19, 2005, the anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq.

COMMEMORATOR: And that's in relation to the United States invasion of Iraq?

Trent: Yes, the invasion and occupation, and the military budget. What we're doing now is building coalitions with different organizations to successfully organize many different people and many different parties. The million worker movement is for working people no matter what nationality, no matter where you work, what kind of job; whether you're in a union or not, whether you're in the streets, or trade stocks, the million worker movement is for you.

COMMEMORATOR: So where is your basic support right now with participation, who do you see as your main allies?

Trent: Our allies and supporters include a coalition of Black Trade Unionist (BTU), Teamster's National Black Caucus, International Action Center, U.S. Labor Against the War, Black Workers for Justice Movement and other grassroots organizations, and rank-and-file workers across the country.

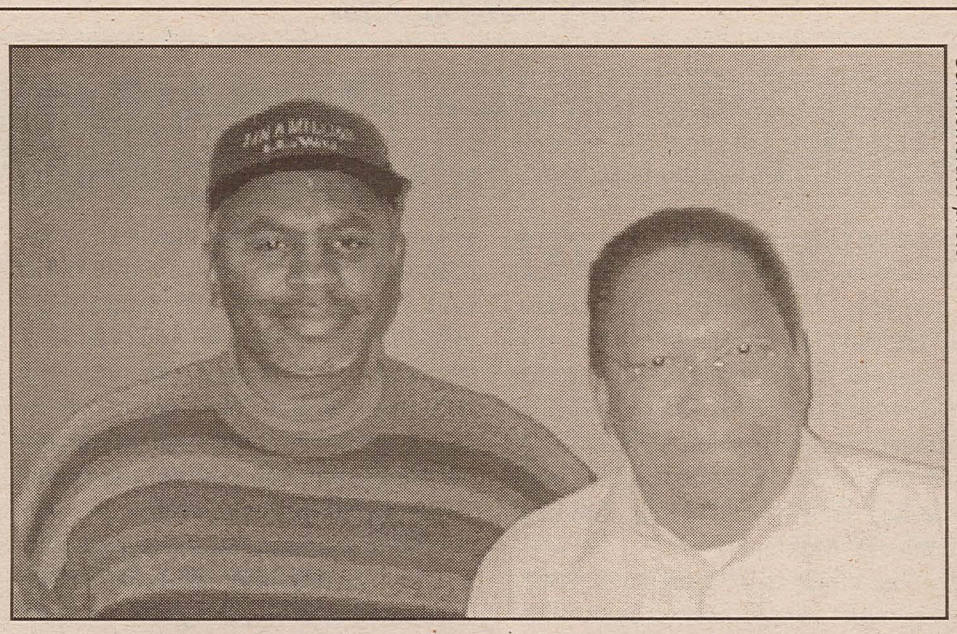
COMMEMORATOR: Out of your list of demands, which I know is quite extensive, which one do you see as the most important or the most urgent, because I know they are all important?

Trent: National healthcare, a living wage, and slashing the military budget in my opinion have to be three of the most important and urgent demands that we have. The others are very close behind. There are so many different issues that need to be addressed; we need a true network of ties to make sure our voices are heard in the right places.

COMMEMORATOR: Please comment a little bit about worker's health care.

Trent: The comment to make about that is actually not very positive. As you know, we had Proposition 72 on the ballot here in California this past election. People in the Oakland/Bay Area were really pushing Prop 72 because we realized that we needed to provide healthcare for the poorest workers in this country. Unfortunately, that proposition was defeated.

COMMEMORATOR: So as to be clear for our readership:



Commemorator photo

San Francisco Local 10 longshoreman Executive Board member Clarence Thomas, who is also a co-chair of the Million Worker March and CCBPP Chairman/Commemorator editor Melvin Dickson

Proposition 72 was about the health coverage of every worker?

Trent: Right. It would have provided a 20% cap on premiums for workers.

So in other words it would have provided 80% healthcare for some of the poorest workers.

COMMEMORATOR: It would have gotten the cost of health care down for working people.

Trent: Right. Because you know you have your companies like Wal-Mart and McDonald's who were opposed to this, and the reason is because it would have forced them to provide the necessary healthcare, which is in my opinion a human right that should be provided anyway. It is very hard to survive here, especially when we are at war. If you look at the demographics today and you look at what's happening with this war and you look at the choices the young people make, what are young people faced with? You're either going to work for Wal-Mart, who is the largest employer of the United States with 2.6 million workers, or you're going to go to the military or you're going to go to jail. This is what it's going to boil down to as things keep going and all these jobs keep being outsourced.

COMMEMORATOR: I noticed you demand cancellation of all corporate "free" trade agreements, including North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Multi-National Agreement on Investments (MAI), and Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). Would you describe for our readership how these policies of corporate free trade affect American workers and workers of all countries? Could you speak a little on that?

Trent: We could spend all night on that topic, but just to make a long story short, what it does is it gives the employers in this country the ability to set up shop in other countries, which pits the workers in other countries against the workers here. It drives wages down all over the world. What people have to realize is that our huge companies that employ millions of Americans have no loyalty and no ethics in regards to where they set up shop. They set up shop where it is the cheapest and where it is the most profitable for them. I can open up a sweatshop in India and take away your $22 per hour union job, and if I'm a huge corporation who is into profits, then I'm going to do it.

COMMEMORATOR: It's good business for them.

Trent: Right. That's good business for big business, and the only thing that's going to stop big business from doing that is if people unionize and people organize all around the world. During the Million Worker March we had a lot of connections with workers around the world. We had a delegation from Haiti; we had a delegation from Japan which actually invited us to meet with railroad workers in Japan.

I kind of got a little bit off the subject. You asked me about the free trade agreement and I'm making the connection as to how it affects workers here and workers in other countries. It pits us against each other in an effort to drive down wages. They actually invited us out to Japan on November 7th where they held a rally for workers in Japan and the Million Worker March was a major part of that rally. Those kinds of connections with workers overseas are so important because the fights that we waged here in this country in the beginning of the 1900's as far as battles to form unions and to organize, those are the same battles that are going to be fought in other countries very, very soon — sooner than we think — because the same things that happened to us then are happening in countries like India now.

COMMEMORATOR: You're talking about the times leading up to the 1930s and the general strikes?

Trent: When you talk about the Great Depression and that era, people were so hungry that they were almost willing to accept any type of pay, any type of wage, any type of working condition. The only problem with that, for employers and for anybody in the government who supports that, is that people grow tired. Poverty is something that people grow tired of very quickly, and people begin to organize. And once people organize, they start a movement and the movement swells into huge things that money can't stop.

COMMEMORATOR: So you're talking about the conditions that predated 1934.

Trent: Exactly. We're basically talking about slavery. Because it was after slavery when the labor movement began to flourish. Slavery, although it was a horrible, horrible thing, historically, taught a valuable lesson to this country about organizing and about unions. Workers were in pretty bad shape dealing with the employers, along with the government that didn't seem to be listening to us but seemed to be listening to them.

People should know that the Million Worker March was not an original idea. In 1963 Martin Luther King Jr. led a major march in Washington, D.C. that was organized primarily by labor unions. Dr. King was a major player in organizing that march. With his connection to the interfaith movement, the civil rights movement, and the labor movement, they made that march a success. Before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed, he was actually organizing garbage workers, and if you remember he started to openly oppose the war in Vietnam. This was a very, very dangerous thing for those in power who wanted to defeat the community.

At the MWM we made a tribute to Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., and his son, Martin L. King III spoke at the rally. You probably will be able to download pictures of that from the website www.million-workermarch.org.

Dr. King, Jr. was committed to economic and social justice. He was organizing the union and non-union workers. He was also planning a Poor People's March on Washington in 1968 before he was assassinated. So, we organized the MWM in that spirit.

COMMEMORATOR: So you start off dealing with class issues.

Trent: Right. We're going straight to the grassroots organizing just like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did and similarly to what the Black Panthers did in the 1960's. You have to understand one thing: I want to be clear that the AFL-CIO and major unions' rank and file were not opposed to the Million Worker March, but there were a few people in the leadership positions who were opposed to it, and the ones who were opposed to it held the most power. That was the problem. And the opposition that we got, the excuse that they used was that it was two weeks before the elections and that it would somehow hurt Kerry, and, of course, the AFL-CIO was in support of Kerry to the tune of $100 million.

The leadership of the Million Worker March understood that it didn't matter who was elected on November the second. The issues like national healthcare, the military budget, and living wage that I talked about earlier, those issues are still on the table. If Kerry had won, he would have needed to hear this.

What the leadership of the AFL-CIO didn't understand was that isn't the US President that is causing the problem; it is the system. You can insert people anywhere in a rotten system and it's not going to do anything, but if you change the system, then that's what will actually help. The system in this country has to be changed and the Million Worker March movement understands that. And the way it gets changed is through grassroots organizing.

COMMEMORATOR: I want you to talk about yourself. Give our readership a biographical sketch of yourself as an organizer, a worker. How long have you been a longshoreman?

Trent: I've been a longshoreman since 1986. In 1995 there was a mass

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Stanley "Tookie" Williams

Continued from page 4

and it has already led to the end of courtroom justice for minority defendants in all nine states that fall under the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

What happened is this: the white prosecutor in Stan's case kicked off all of the Blacks on Stan's jury, leaving Stan with an all-White jury to deliberate his case.

The California State Supreme Court twice censured this prosecutor for the same discriminatory behavior. This prosecutor also made racially coded remarks during his closing argument, comparing Stan during the trial to a Bengal tiger in the zoo and stating that a black community — South Central Los Angeles — was equivalent to being the natural "habitat" of a Bengal Tiger.

But the Ninth Circuit ruled that this type of racist courtroom behavior by a prosecutor was acceptable, even though it's unconstitutional.

Mr. Williams' case is now on its way to the U.S. Supreme Court. If that court does not overturn this ruling, he could be executed as soon as this summer. But the impact of this racially biased ruling is far greater than just one man.

By denying Stan a hearing to re-examine these issues, the Ninth Circuit has created what is known as "case law." Case law becomes the law of the land — the land in this case composed of the nine western states over which the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has jurisdiction. (Those states are California, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho and Montana.)

Therefore, as of February 2, 2005, prosecutors in any criminal court within those nine states now have the legal right to discriminate against prospective jurors who are Black — or members of another minority — by kicking them off juries, leaving all-White juries as the sole deliberators of a case.

This ruling sets back the civil rights movement by at least 100 years. Moreover, if the U.S. Supreme Court does not reverse this decision in the next few months, this law is destined to become case law for the entire United States of America.

Thus, this ruling is the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of the 21st Century. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, issued by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1896, ruled that Blacks did not have to be treated equally with Whites in America. This ruling is considered one of the worst decisions in the history of American jurisprudence. What 15 judges of the Ninth Circuit decided on February 2, 2005, can stand alongside *Plessy v. Ferguson,* the infamous "separate but equal" ruling. No American should allow our courts to take us back to 1896-type decisions. No American should allow this recent Ninth Circuit ruling to stand.

We must organize as responsible citizens to fight the implementation of this shameful ruling and to save the life of Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a death-row prisoner facing execution by the State of California in a matter of a few months, a man who did not receive a fair trial, a man who continues to help hundreds of thousands of children worldwide avoid gangs, violence and incarceration, while he awaits justice in a 9-by-4 foot cell.

Learn how you can stop this judicial outrage by contacting Barbara Becnel, Stan's co-author of children's books, at Tookie@Tookie.com or by calling her at her office at 510-235-9780.

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Haiti's Blood

Continued from page 9

convenient that he has forgotten France's initiative in orchestrating the charade which led to the ouster of Aristide in February. How convenient that he has forgotten how offended France is by Aristide's demand that France should repay the money it extorted from Haiti for over a century, in a Blackmailer's Deal which bled Haiti into destitution.

Professor Peter Hallward writes (*New Left Review* 27 May 2004) "...France only reestablished the trade and diplomatic relations essential to the new country's survival after Haiti agreed, in 1825, to pay its old colonial master a 'compensation' of some 150 million francs for the loss of its slaves — an amount roughly equal to the French annual budget at the time, or around ten year's worth of total revenue in Haiti — and to grant punishing commercial discounts.

"With its economy still shattered by the colonial wars, Haiti could only begin paying this debt by borrowing, at extortionate rates of interest, 24 million francs from private French banks....by the end of the nineteenth century Haiti's payments to France consumed around 80% of the national budget; France received the last installment in 1947. Haitians have thus had to pay their original oppressors three times over — through the slaves' initial labor, through compensation for the French loss of this labor, and then in interest on the payment of this compensation. No other single factor played so important a role in establishing Haiti as a systematically indebted country, the condition which in turn 'justified' a long and debilitating series of appropriations-by-gunboat."

The French, always so civilized, decided earlier this year to intervene, as part compensation for their disobedience over Iraq.

Hallward, discreetly, doesn't mention the payment in blood.

The French, always so civilized, decided earlier this year to intervene, as part compensation for their disobedience over Iraq. Hallward remarks that the French initiative guaranteed the US safe entry into and painless withdrawal from this "Liberia at their gates" as the French Investigatory Commission put it, allowing the US a measure of protection from the rage of its black constituents.

It has all been very civilized; everything is deniable.

It makes one wonder why the smell of blood is so strong. Strange, especially from a place *Le Monde* describes as "The country that doesn't quite exist." It must be the obverse of the Cheshire Cat. The country disappears, only the sizzle of the branding iron remains, lingering in the air.

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All Power to the People

Million Workers

Continued from page 11

signup to be in the union office for longshoremen and my name was picked out of the barrel. There was another mass signup in 1999 where cards were drawn and I was still going through that list. I worked my way up, and in 1999 I was given the opportunity to become an 'A' registration longshoreman. After I was 'A' registration for a year, I became eligible to run for union office, and I immediately ran for the position of business agent. So basically I represented workers on their jobs, handled grievances on the job and off the job, and labor relations with the employers. I was awarded a membership and elected to be a business agent, alternate business agent for my first year, and the next year I ran again and was elected to be the fulltime business agent for the next two years.

COMMEMORATOR: Tell the readers what the business agent is all about.

Trent: Well, the first thing I should probably tell them is what the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) is. The ILWU came about in 1937. The International Longshoreman Association (ILA), which represented the east coast and southern United States longshoremen, had a general strike in 1934 where the longshoremen in the Bay Area played a major part in the beginning of this general strike. We were actually the ILA in 1934. We broke off from the ILA in 1937 and formed the ILWU, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which now represents longshoremen on the west coast. During the 1934 struggle there was a bond between the sailors union (The Merchant Seamen) and the longshoremen. The sailor's union played a major part in the victory and the gains made in 1934 and beyond. That was a very entrenched struggle where two workers were killed, shot by the San Francisco police.

COMMEMORATOR: That was the beginning of the general strike where the city joined in?

Trent: Right. The entire Bay Area was shut down completely. Actually one of the founders of our union, who was a major player, was Harry Bridges, a popular labor figure who migrated here from Australia. During the great dock worker strike in 1934, Black workers were used as scabs on the San Francisco docks. Harry Bridges attended Black churches and asked the ministers to address their congregations. He made an appeal to Black workers to join the picket line and in return, he would ensure Black men were hired as longshoremen after the strike was over. Today Blacks are longshoremen up and down the west coast. Harry Bridges understood that white workers could not advance without Black workers advancing.

As you see, the ILWU still holds onto certain principles. We know that the most powerful statement you can make is to make ties with all the different groups. They tried to deport him several times. There was even one story that we used to talk about. In my household there were union discussions going on all the time. We heard stories about labor leaders like William "Bill" Chester who was the ILWU president. He actually was a major player in the civil rights movement. He also made connections between the ILWU and Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. — which as you see in the footage of the Million Worker Union March, he presented Martin Luther King III with a commemorative picture of Bill Chester and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Local 10 union meeting. And that was in 1967. When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was made an honorary member of the longshore and warehouse union, Bill was the international vice-president.

COMMEMORATOR: So you grew up in a labor family.

Trent: My father became a longshoreman, my uncles and my relatives became longshoremen. Actually, David Hilliard used to be a longshoreman. That's how he knows my whole family. The interesting thing about it is that we used to have discussions in our household about labor leaders like William Chester, whom I have a lot of respect for, and also labor leaders like Harry Bridges, who was actually offered $300,000 by the employers to leave the country. There were a host of other labor leaders who grew out of Local 10, one being one of the major players in the Million Worker March — Leo Robinson.

COMMEMORATOR: In the '80's he was active during the Anti-apartheid campaign?

Trent: Yes, he's a retired longshoreman. As I recall in 1984 there was a major demonstration against apartheid and Leo Robinson was one of the major players in that where he was instrumental in drawing nationwide attention to apartheid. Nelson Mandela actually came to the Bay Area on his tour when he was released from prison, and he thanked Local 10 personally for what we had done. There was a ship and I don't know exactly where it was bound, but it had South African cargo on it and the longshoremen refused to work the South African cargo. Once that ship left here it went to a series of other ports where those other longshoremen in other countries still had solidarity and would not work that cargo. You can see how that drew attention. Leo Robinson was a major player in the development.

All Power to the People!

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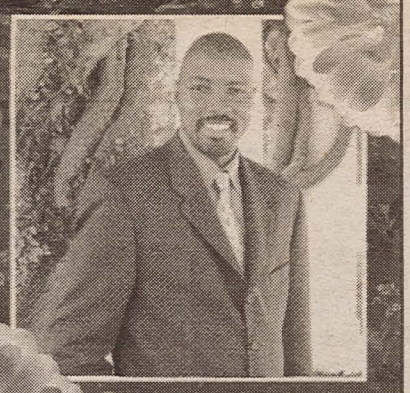
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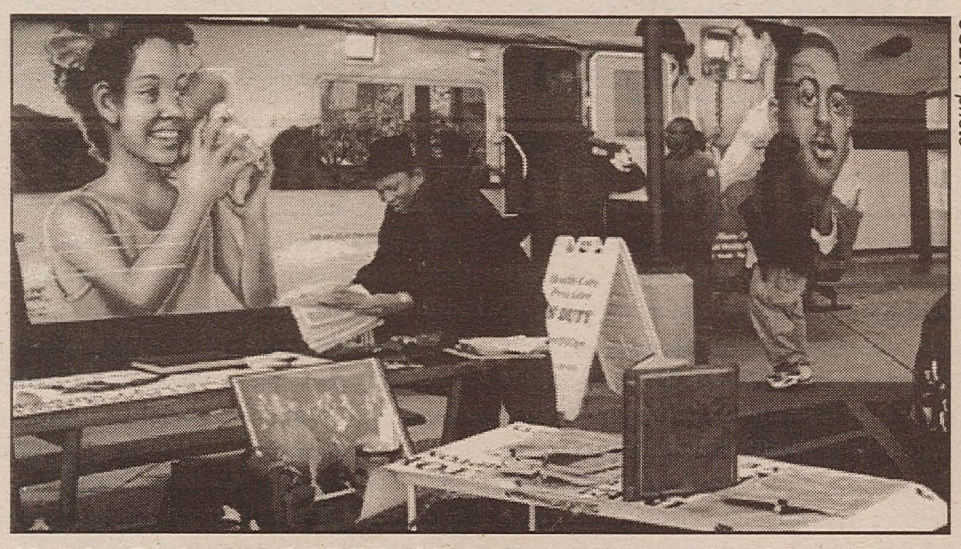


CCBPP photo

Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman, sets up archive display table at the State of African-American Male (SAAM) conference, at Oakland's Laney College, December 3, 2004.

CCBPP photo

Children from East Oakland's Archway Elementary School visit CCBPP Mini Archive at the State of the African-American Male Conference.

Conference

Continued from page 1

Seale, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, was the keynote speaker for the conference.

Prior to the opening of the conference, staff of the James A. Watson Wellness Center provided free diabetes and high-blood pressure tests for males and females, and screened high-risk African-American males for prostate cancer. This kind of testing and screening is reminiscent of the historic practice of the Black Panther Party in providing care to members from the low-income African-American community. Dr. Geoffrey Watson, the Center's director, is a sponsor of *The Commemorator.*

At the opening of the conference, following a prayer, the Castleers, a choir formerly out of Castlemont High School in East Oakland, sang the Black national anthem[1], which had just about everyone on their feet.

While the conference was directed toward African-American males, African-American women also played a leading role at the event. Oakland Congresswoman Barbara Lee and the Congressional Black Caucus including Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-Texas) hosted the conference. Other guest speakers included Congressional Black Caucus member Danny Davis (D-Illinois), and Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown.

A major objective of the conference was the introduction of the African-American Initiative by Congresswoman Lee. Lee announced, "I am happy that Oakland was the site of one of the first conferences in this nationwide SAAM initiative, because the challenges facing our community are mounting, and I believe we will reach a state of emergency if we don't work together. I specifically focused our attention on the challenges facing former felons re-entering the community, as a two-step strategy to address problems like record expungement, jobs, health and education."

BPP Co-founder Bobby Seale

As former BPP leader Bobby Seale approached the podium, the audience gave him a standing ovation. Brother Seale presented a brief history of himself and the Black Panther Party, which he emphasized, "…was more about building survival programs than simply picking up the gun. Every move was strategically planned as opposed to simply reacting to racists." Seale quoted Hoover[2] as saying in 1969, the "BPP's free breakfast program for children was a threat to America." Seale stated that it represented the best and most influential activity of the Black Panther Party.

Pamela Thomas was moved by Seale's presentation. "It is no wonder that the FBI sought to destroy the Black Panther Party. It is also no wonder that all of us, not just Black men, but Black women are being locked up for anything and everything and 80% of juveniles who appear in US courts are functionally illiterate," she commented. "That is one of the reasons I volunteer with the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign."

African-American women hold the fastest-rising incarceration rate in the United States[3] and are under attack by the same profit-driven system that is neglecting poor people everywhere.

Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

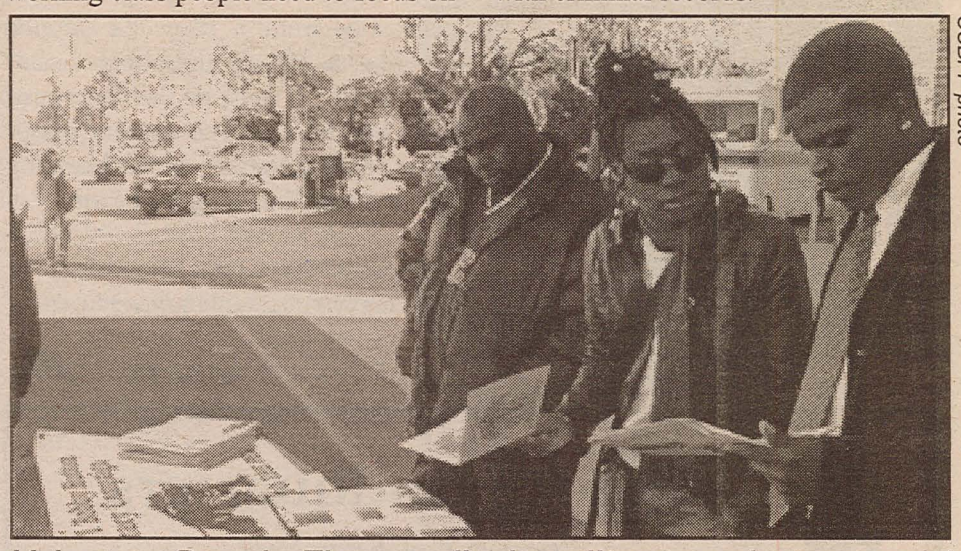
Inside the hall, many great speakers moved the crowd to their feet. However, one of the most insightful comments came from outside the front door of the town hall meeting from the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party founder, Melvin Dickson. Dickson told a group of people gathering around the CCBPP literature table, "The real problem is that these social programs, schools and libraries, are being cut to the bone while hundreds of billions of those same tax dollars are wasted on the Halliburtons, weapons of mass destruction and on murdering thousands of people who have never attacked this country."

Dickson continued to point out, "That is why Black people and all working class people need to focus on how to build unity and advance the ability of our communities to govern themselves so we are not at the mercy of the capitalist big-shots who dominate the government — that means organizing. We need volunteers who want to take part in our organizer training program to take on leadership roles in working to implement the Ten-Point Program. Volunteers are needed to organize the production of the newspaper, coordinate membership participation in door-to-door canvasses and other activities including building the speaking engagement committee in order to reach others in the community and get them involved. Not to organize is to give our labor and potential political power to the monopoly capitalistic class that runs the government.

"We have to observe and understand the forces in motion. The same social force that violates poor prisoners and their families is the social force that supports wars of aggression in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. The people already have enough laws. It's time to make law work for us and not for the global ruling class."

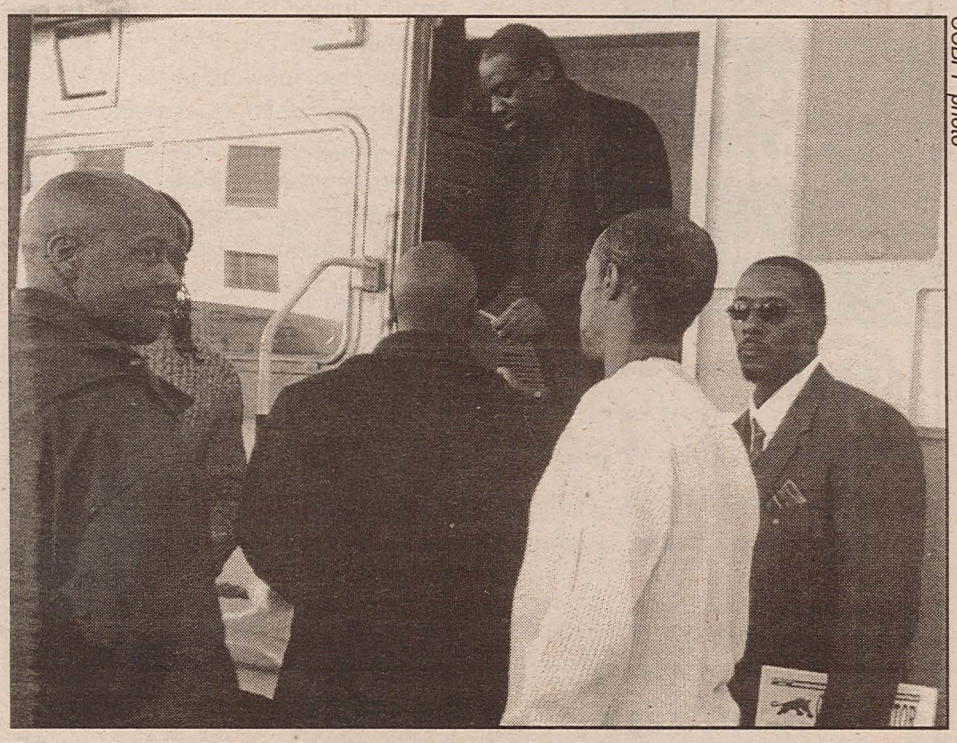
Children and Families of Prisoners

Dorsey Nunn, Director of the Prisoners with Children group based out of San Francisco, and a former inmate of the California prison industry, is leading a campaign to end the lifetime ban on food stamps for government welfare and food stamps for people with criminal records, to implement a Bill of Rights for children of incarcerated parents, and to shut down the California Youth Authority. Nunn said, "I am working for the plight of prisoners and their families, and to end discrimination and the disenfranchisement of people with criminal records."



CCBPP photo

Volunteer Pamela Thomas displays literature, banners, and posters about the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Program.



CCBPP photo

December 3, 2004 African-American males received health check-ups at the mobile clinic of the James A. Watson Wellness Center.

For over a decade, Nunn has been promoting a campaign to enfranchise former prisoners. On July 27, 2004, Nunn sent a letter on behalf of Prisoners with Children to California Secretary of State Kevin Shelley, posing the question, "Are persons who are in jail serving a felony sentence allowed to vote while in custody? And are persons who are on probation allowed to vote? Are prisoners in county jails allowed to vote?" Mr. Shelley did not respond until November 5, three days after the November 2 election. The Secretary's letter opened by stating, "Yes," to Mr. Nunns' query regarding whether potential voters with felony convictions could vote. Nunn pointed out however, that the Secretary of State then contradicted himself in his written response when

Continued on page 15

Conference

Continued from page 14

he went on to cite Article II, Section 4 of the California State Constitution which states:

"The Legislature shall prohibit improper practices that affect elections and shall provide for the disqualification of electors while mentally incompetent or imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony."

Workshops

In workshops on the lack of living-wage jobs, education and increased incarceration of Black males and females, local leaders facilitated dialogue between individuals and organizations addressing the issues affecting African-American males.

One of the main objectives of the State of the African-American Male conference, according to Congresswoman Lee, was to create networks that are actively involved in, and empowered by, the democratic process to improve the conditions for these men and boys. The conference had overtones of consciousness-raising and resistance to current-day attempts to uphold White capitalist supremacy through the oppression of the poor masses. The conference did reverberate Black Panther Party point number nine of the Ten-Point Program, of WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE:

9. *We want freedom for all Black and oppressed people now held in U.S federal, state, county, city and military prisons and jails. We want trials by a jury of our peers for all persons charged with so-called crimes under the laws of this country.*

Volunteer with CCBPP

This was one more step in an old struggle with a new urgency. The organizers of the State of the African-American Male conference have vowed to continue their efforts and CCBPP will be there with agitation, signup clipboards and *Commemorators* to offer national opportunities to engage in practice to effect real change in these conditions.

For those who feel the urgency of the struggle and want to get involved right away, call CCBPP Volunteers Coordinator Kush Amen at 510-652-7170 to arrange for an interview toward an organizer training program today!

1 Lift Every Voice And Sing *(1926), by James Weldon Johnson, author, activist and executive of the NAACP.*

2 Hoover refers to J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 1924-1972, who stated that one of his goals for the FBI was to destroy the BPP.

3 Essence, *September 2000, by Angela Y. Davis.*

Bush's Attack

Continued from page 5

Social Security officials say the agency is carrying out its mission to educate the public, including more than 47 million beneficiaries, and to support the agenda of President Bush.

But agency employees have complained to Social Security officials that they are being conscripted into a political battle over the future of the program, according to the *New York Times*. Deborah C. Fredericksen of Minneapolis, who has worked for the Social Security Administration for 31 years, said, "Many employees believe that the president and this agency are using scare tactics to promote private accounts."

"The Social Security fight is really more of a class fight. Those of us in the bottom 80% stand to lose. Those in the top 20% will gain."
— Dr. Spriggs

Dr. William Spriggs, Senior Fellow at the Economic Policy Institute, said in the December. 15 press conference call with reporters, "What's being privatized is the risk, and that's very important for people to recognize. (Social Security) is a social insurance. We are taking everybody and putting them in the risk pool, because one of three things will happen to you as a worker: You might become disabled, you might die and, if God is willing, you'll live a long life and you would have to worry about retirement.

The Black general public must remain alert, Spriggs warned. "We are starting to listen to the other side. We must broaden the definition of public morality and hold them accountable, instead of voting against our own interests because we were listening to someone else's sense of morality."

As of right now, for instance, the majority of Blacks 65 and older count on Social Security as their chief retirement income, averaging five out of every 10 retired citizens counting on this for 90% of their income and four out of 10 relying on it as their sole income. If the malicious plans prevail, the numbers of seniors living in poverty will more than double from 23.9% to 58.2% according to Rep. Stephanie Tubbs-Jones (D-Ohio)

"The Social Security fight is really more of a class fight. Those of us in the bottom 80% stand to lose. Those in the top 20 % will gain," Dr. Spriggs said.

At the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center Dec. 16, 2004, Bush stated, "I think it will be healthy for our system for people to own and manage their own account(s)." He further told members of the conference "People will want to carefully watch decisions made by government at all levels if they have a vital stake in watching their portfolio grow."

Tubbs-Jones strongly disagreed. "I, and many other Democrats believe that the administration's plan to privatize Social Security by establishing private accounts will be detrimental to the nest-egg that many Americans, particularly minorities, depend on in their retirement. This is a dramatic change in the American social contract, to talk about privatizing Social Security."

As Spriggs explains, "A recent study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities stated that recent plans to replace part of the Social Security with individual accounts would significantly increase federal borrowing for at least several decades. Over the next 10 years alone, it would increase deficits and borrowing by between $1 trillion and $5.3 trillion."

What does not kill us, will give us one more day to organize and build solidarity so that our class can win power, material and moral power that has been taken from the people by the capitalistic ruling-class.

Please call *The Commemorator:* 510-652-7170.

Quotes taken from White House Correspondent Askia Muhammad's article in The Final Call, *and Robert Pear of the* New York Times

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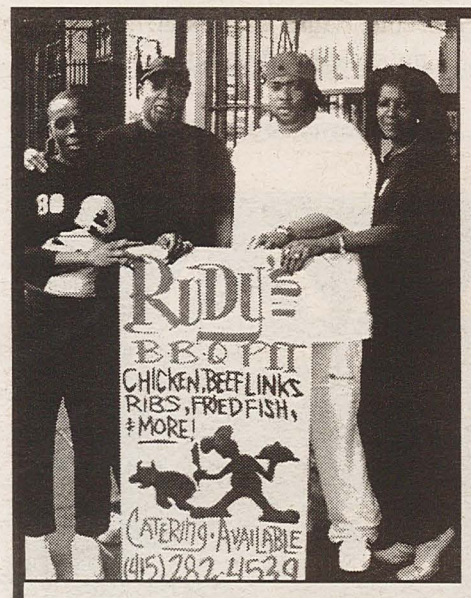

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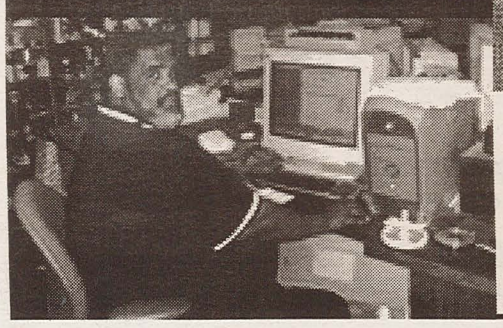

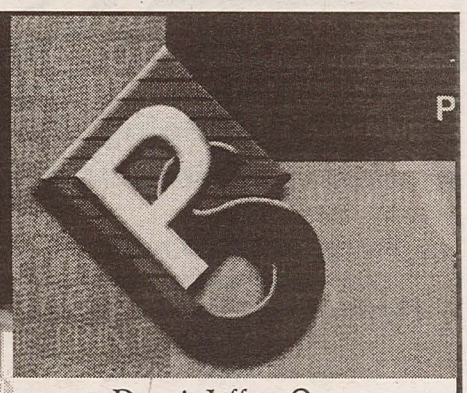

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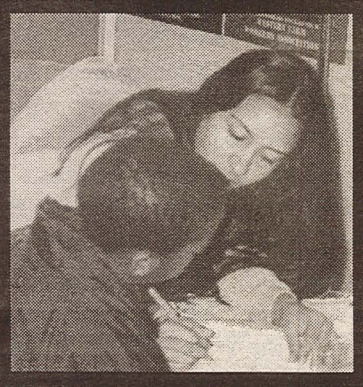

Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign

NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

510-652-7170

Free Chip

Continued from page 3

cretion with regard to parole denial. Says Mason now, "I've had zero response from the Governor. And this from a man who claims to be interested in prison reform!"

Chip's next chance for release comes in August, 2005. Mason is appealing to all *Commemorator* readers to flood the Board of Prison Terms with letters supporting Chip's release for the next eight months.

The mailing address for the California Board of Prison Terms is: 1515 K Street, Suite 600, Sacramento, CA, 95814. Their phone number is (916) 445-4072. The CBPT Chairwoman is Margarita Perez, and the Commissioners who conduct parole hearings are: Alfred Angele, Carol Daly, Susan Fisher, Sharon Lawin, Kenneth Risen, and Booker Welch.

Letters should include that according to the rule of law, Chip should have been released years ago and that he will have met all the criteria described above by his next parole hearing.

"In a lot of cases the authorities think the inmate has no support outside," explains Mason about the importance of letter writing. "They are not celebrities, others won't be concerned. In this case, over the years, Maxine Waters, Omar Bradley from the Compton City Council, other city council members, have been supportive. Regular folks too, have been keeping tabs on him, writing letters on his behalf. It's been a tremendous help. We've won small victories for Chip. For instance, without public support he wouldn't have been transferred to Lancaster — closer to his mother — he wouldn't have had surgery, and so on. Even so, the Lancaster transfer took a year to negotiate. The letters really are necessary."

Who is Romaine (Chip) Fitzgerald?

Chip was born and raised in Compton, California. While a teenager, he was imprisoned for two years in Tracy's youth authority institution (aka a maximum security youth prison). In CYA, he was always speaking out against prison conditions, treatment of prisoners, and rampant racism. Consequently, he was in and out of the 'hole' for over a year of his sentence. While incarcerated, he met other brothers dealing with the same conditions, and they began holding political education classes. They also made a pact. They saw the Black Panther Party as the vanguard of the struggle and when released, they would all join. After his release, Chip worked in the Watts section of LA and soon became a section leader on the West side.

Of course, law enforcement had kept their eyes on him. He was that "madman" they had railroaded off to Tracy two years before, back on the streets again. And now, he was armed with the ideology of the Black Panther Party. LA's infamous Metro Squad tried to link him to a case of two other revolutionaries, Robert Williams and Luxey Irving, and said that he feloniously assaulted a California Highway Patrolman. Then, to insure that he never got out, they charged him with the murder of a security guard.

On 9 October 1969, Chip was convicted of first degree murder for the death of a security guard during the commission of an armed robbery. In 1970 he was sent to death row and in 1972 his sentence was commuted to life with parole.

The Crime

The crime he was convicted of took place in the early morning of 29 September 1969. Security guard Barge Miller was employed by Land Johnson Security at the Von's Shopping Center at El Segundo and Avalon Boulevards in LA. Just before 2 am, Miller was shot and killed while sitting in his car. Two men were seen fleeing the scene.

Chip has always denied being involved in the robbery or the death of the security guard. He maintains that he was the victim of a COINTELPRO set up, caught up in the web of repression spun by Hoover, state and local law enforcement in the service of the racist, capitalist system. In fact, Chip was at home and his alibi was provided by his two housemates, sisters Doris Houghton and Janice Sadler, who both firmly stated that he had not left their apartment on the evening of 28 September 1969.

The Trial

It's noteworthy that at Chip's trial, this same California Highway Patrolman testified on his behalf. Under oath, he stated that, at the time, police officers had orders to shoot Panthers. The trial judge admonished the jury to ignore this testimony.

Another unusual feature of the trial was that while a key witness identified Chip in court as the shooter, earlier he had told the police he did not get a good look at the man's face. This witness had been shown several photographs of suspects, including one of Chip, but he could not identify him as the shooter. He was only able to ID him when he was sitting at the defendants' table in court.

Furthermore, in early September, Chip had suffered a head injury and had kept a 2" wide bandage on the wound for about a month. He had removed the bandage just a few days before he was arrested on 9 October. The interesting thing is that the witness did not mention a bandage on the head of the shooter, something it would be difficult to miss.

Within four days, a jury had been selected, the trial conducted, the jury had deliberated and the decision rendered. Chip was found guilty and sentenced to the gas chamber.

All Power to the People

Mumia

Continued from page 3

the 8th best city for business in the US. It's because Oakland isn't a poor town. Only some people in it are poor. For others, it's a gold mine.

So why, in a city so good for business, where billions are made annually, are the schools so fiscally challenged?

Why? Oakland teacher Steven Miller explained why in a recent article, when he wrote:

"Oakland is not a poor city. In fact, it's economy is the 20th largest metropolitan economy in the US and the 84th largest in the world.

"The city's Gross Metropolitan Product for 2001 was $99.46 billion, larger than San Jose, Denver, Pittsburgh, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines. This vast wealth comes from Oakland's port, the country's fourth largest. However, the port has been legally separated from the city government since the days of the Black Panthers. So none of its revenue 'can be used for schools.'

"Why? 'It's the law!' The same scam of creating artificial legalisms to create artificial crisis is being used across the country. California's economy is the largest in the country and the fifth largest in the world. However, we are told 'the state is in debt.'

"Under the 'Governator,' the state is destroying its community college system, once the best in the world, in the name of 'fiscal accountability.'"

This fall, half a million fewer students will go to college in the state than last year. However there will be no cuts for the country's largest prison system.

[From: Steven Miller, "Oakland's Public Schools: The Coal Miner's Canary", *People's Tribune* (Online Edition), Vol. 31 No. 9/ Sept. '04, P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654, http://www.lrna. org.]

There is no sane reason why the Oakland Unified School District should be in need. It's like being thirsty, but not being allowed to drink from a river nearby. In a truly sane society, where the young are taught how to live in tomorrow's world, there should be no need.

What we have now is unbridled greed. The corrosive logic of business has been pervading the nation's schools, and a public, social service is being managed as just another commodity. And kids are losing.

The business interests in this country want nothing public, and all things private, so that it can be owned, and exploited. These interests want nothing less than the extinction of the New Deal, the evisceration of social security, the "public" removed from public schools.

That's the objective of the right wing in this country, and under these madcap programs like No Child Left Behind, they are nearing their objective. Every time I hear that lying phrase, I think of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, where no child was left — alive.

Martin Luther King, Jr., if he were alive today, would be fighting for the children of Oakland, demanding resources from those who have them — the wealthy, downtown.

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Huey's Corner

Continued from page 6

apartment—including a detail labeled "Fred's bed."[101]

O'Neal also told Mitchell that there were weapons in the house, but according to all FBI documents, he said that the weapons had been legally purchased. O'Neal's deposition, taken years later, noted that there was nothing unusual about the fact that there guns in the house.[102] An internal bureau memorandum indicates how unexceptional this information was:

No [word deleted] matter is being opened in the Chicago office concerning this matter inasmuch as information indicates the weapons were apparently legally purchased under the terms of existing Firearms laws, possession of some is apparently rampant throughout BPP members and apartment rent is paid with BPP funds. [103]

Mitchell had known that the Panthers had guns, but had never asked very much about it. However, on this occasion, Mitchell was particularly interested. He asked exactly what guns were in the house and also when Fred Hampton was usually there. O'Neal provided a list of weapons and confirmed that Hampton both worked and lived in the apartment.

Armed with the information about the weapons, the floor plan, and the fact that Hampton lived there, Mitchell began to peddle the raid. According to his own testimony, he met on the night of November 19 with people from the Gang Intelligence Division of the Chicago Police Department and they talked about the possibility of a raid [104] In a November 21 memorandum from Mitchell to Marlin Johnson, the head of the Chicago FBI office, Mitchell communicated the floor plan of 2337 Monroe Street and informed Johnson that he had already given this information to both the Chicago Police Department and the State Attorney's Office. [105]

By December 3, the Chicago office of the FBI was able to advise Washington that the local authorities were "currently planning a positive course of action relative to this information." [106] In other words, when the Blackstone Rangers failed to take the bait, the FBI enlisted the State Attorney's Office to carry out the job for them.

At the same time, O'Neal met with Mitchell and then wandered back over to the Panther office and finally over to 2337 Monroe to eat dinner with Fred Hampton, Deborah Johnson, and several others who were then in the apartment. Meanwhile, the fourteen-man squad of the Illinois State Police which was to carry out the raid was being assembled by the State Attorney's Office.

Fred Hampton lay dead on a blood-soaked bed. He had barely moved from where he had lain asleep. According to later testimony by both an FBI informant and the occupants of the apartment, it is probable that he had been drugged.

By 3:00 a.m., the police raid squad was being briefed. The floor plan, which the FBI's Mitchell had provided, was on the board and the search warrant which was based on FBI informer O'Neal's information was on hand. The men were armed with machine guns and other heavy weapons; they had been hand picked and they were being psychologically prepared for a combat mission.[107]

At 2337 Monroe Street, nine people were asleep in the four-room apartment when suddenly the doors opened and a hail of bullets tore through the walls, the beds, and the occupants. After nine minutes, the screams had stopped; the volleys had ended, and silence had once again descended on the apartment where minutes before the police had been screaming, "We got 'em, we got 'em." [108]

Fred Hampton lay dead on a blood-soaked bed. He had barely moved from where he had lain asleep. According to later testimony by both an FBI informant and the occupants of the apartment, it is probable that he had been drugged. Deborah Johnson, a BPP member, stated that he had fallen asleep while talking on the phone earlier in the evening. Maria Fischer, an FBI and Chicago Police Department informant in the BPP, said that the FBI asked her to drug Hampton before the raid so that he wouldn't resist. He did not resist; he never woke up.

Mark Clark, 17 years old, was dead also. He had been seated in the living room on a chair. He now lay on the floor. Five more people were wounded. Four others escaped without injury.

Ninety bullets had been shot into the apartment in a period of less than ten minutes. According to the federal grand jury report, only one of those shots had been fired by a Panther. [109]

Thirty-one of the ninety shots entered the bedroom where Hampton slept. He had been shot four times—in an arm and a shoulder, and twice in the head. Three other people had lain on the same bed during the nine-minute hail of bullets, yet none of them had been hurt. Deborah Johnson, then eight months pregnant with Fred Hampton's child, has said that minutes after the firing stopped and after she had been taken from the bedroom to the kitchen, she heard two single shots and then a policeman say, "Now he's good and dead." An independent commission headed by Roy Williams and Ramsey Clark concluded that "the probability is that Hampton was alone in the bed when shot." [110]

Immediately following the raid, a series of "urgent" teletypes were sent from Chicago to Washington, D.C., which gave details of the events of December 4. The first of these teletypes was quick to inform Headquarters that the police had "positively identified Hampton as being killed."[111] What followed were a series of almost hourly bulletins reporting that the area was calm.

Obviously pleased with the results, Marlin Johnson sent the following memorandum, to FBI headquarters asking that William O'Neal receive a special bonus:

A detailed inventory of the weapons and also a detailed floor plan of the apartment were furnished to local authorities. In addition, the identities of BPP members utilizing the apartment were furnished. This information was not available from any other source and subsequently proved to be of tremendous value in that it subsequently saved injury and possible death to officers participating in a raid at the address on the morning of 12/4/69. The raid was based on the information furnished by informant.... During the resistance by the BPP members at the time of the raid... Fred Hampton was killed. It is felt that this information is of considerable value in consideration of a special payment for informant requested in the Chicago letter. [112]

On December 11, 1969, the Chicago office received the following Airtel:

Authority is granted to make captioned informant special payment of $300 over and above presently authorized levels of payment for uniquely valuable services which he rendered over the past several months. [113]

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[87] *FBI Memorandum from Hqtrs. to Field Offices, November 25, 1968.*

[88] *FBI Memorandum from Chicago Field Office to Hqtrs. December 16, 1968.*

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] *FBI Memorandum from Chicago Field Office to Hqtrs., January 13, 1969*

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] *A generally fine treatment of Hampton's contributions to the Chicago and national Black community is found in "A Collective dedication. Ten Years After the Murder of Fred Hampton," Keep Strong, December 1979 - January 1980, pp.41-65*

[93] *Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 69 and Transcript 8985 in* Hampton v. City of Chicago, *No. 70-C-1384, US Dist. Ct. (N.D. 111, 1977).*

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Plaintiffs' Exhibit Nos. 16 and 17 and Transcript 6558-9, 6566 in* Hampton v. Chicago, *No. 70-C-1384.*

[96] *Transcript 29186-90, 28323 in* Hampton v. Chicago, *No. 70-C-1384.*

[97] *Brief for Plaintiff-Appellants in* Hampton v. Chicago, *US Ct. of Appeals (7th Cir. 1978) p. 12*

[98] *Brief for Plaintiff-Appellants in* Hampton v. Chicago, *US Ct. of Appeals (7th Cir. 1978), pp. 10-11.*

[99] *Plaintiffs' Exhibits Nos. 50,51,53, and 55, Transcript 6682-6705, 6212-6215 in* Hampton v Chicago, *No. 70-C-1384.*

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] *Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 21; Transcript 6910-50 in* Hampton v Chicago, *No. 70-C1384.*

[102] *Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 21; Transcript 22429-36, 22440 in* Hampton v Chicago, *No. 70-C1384.*

[103] *FBI Internal Memorandum by Roy M. Mitchell, Agent, FBI Chicago Field Office, November 21, 1969.*

[104] *Plaintiffs' Exhibits Nos. 21 and 23; Transcript 6988-9,* Hampton v. Chicago, *No. 70-C 1384.*

[105] *FBI Internal Memorandum by Roy M Mitchell, Agent, FBI Chicago Field Office, November 21, 1969.*

[106] *Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 25,* Hampton v. Chicago, *No. 70-C-1384.*

[107] *Transcript 25398, 25400, and 25406-7,* Hampton v. Chicago, *No. 70-1384*

[108] *Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 450,* Hampton v. Chicago, *No. 70-C-1384.*

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] *Commission of Inquiry into the Black Panthers' and the Police. Search and Destroy (New York: Metropolitan Applied Research Center, 1973).*

[111] *FBI Memorandum from SAC, Chicago to Director, December 8, 1969*

[112] *Ibid.*

[113] *FBI Memorandum from Director to SAC. Chicago, December 8, 1969.*

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AIDS in Africa: New Plague or Old Illnesses of Poverty?

Racist HIV Myth Hides Ruthless U.S. Exploitation.

Unlike in the United States, AIDS in Africa is most frequently diagnosed based on four very imprecise clinical symptoms—diarrhea, fever, persistent cough, and weight loss greater than 10% over two months. *HIV antibody tests are not required to diagnose a case of African AIDS.* These four clinical symptoms are identical to the problems created by conditions of poverty that have troubled Africa and other developing areas of the world for centuries. In fact, symptoms of the so-called African AIDS epidemic are indistinguishable from the effects of malnutrition, unsanitary drinking and bathing water, and common curable conditions like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and parasitic infections.

Rather than solve the problems of African poverty caused by centuries of ruthless Western exploitation, the U.S. government insists on broadcasting the doomsday notion that Africa is suddenly gripped by a deadly, spreading sexual plague. According to these American health authorities, salvation from sickness can only be found in profitable pills manufactured by the white West and exported to black Africa.

America's Racist HIV Myth

The idea that AIDS originated in Africa is a popular myth without any scientific or epidemiological evidence. News reports that blame AIDS on African green monkeys are based upon elaborate speculation about species-jumping viruses rather than reliable proof. Tall tales about the spread of AIDS are promoted through the most vulgar and racist sexual stereotypes about promiscuous African people.

Still, the numbers speak for themselves. According to the 1999 *WHO Global HIV/AIDS Report,* the total number of AIDS cases in Africa virtually equals the total number of cases in America even though Africa, with its 650 million citizens, has more than two times the population of the United States. Africa is often cited as a worst case example of what could happen in America despite figures demonstrating that 99.5% of Africans do not have AIDS, and among Africans who test HIV positive, 97% do not have AIDS.

The Truth About African AIDS:

- **HIV antibody tests are not required for an AIDS diagnosis in Africa.**
- **African AIDS is diagnosed by four very imprecise clinical symptoms:**
  - **— Diarrhea**
  - **— Fever**
  - **— Persistent cough**
  - **— Weight loss greater than 10% over two months**
- **Tuberculosis, malaria, and measles far outnumber cases of AIDS in Africa.**
- **AIDS is not the leading cause of illness or death in any African nation.**

While Africa is the frequent target of damaging AIDS media reports, the total number of cases on the continent is relatively small. For example, from 1981 through 1999 cumulative AIDS cases for South Africa, the area claimed hardest hit by HIV, were just 12,825.

Exporting Extermination: AIDS Pills Kill!

It is undeniable that experimental AIDS treatments like protease inhibitors and AZT are all highly toxic, dangerous products. Strokes, muscle wasting, anemia, physical deformities, dementia, birth defects, organ failure, and death are some of the "side effects" of these poisons. Thousands of gay men in the 1980s and 1990s died from AZT poisoning. Now the U.S. State Department has elevated AIDS to the level of a threat to national security in order to gain public support for exporting AZT to pregnant African women. Outspoken leaders like South African President Thabo Mbeki—hard pressed to explain why developing nations stricken with famine and civil chaos should spend what little money they have on toxic anti-HIV drugs while millions starve—are relentlessly attacked as unfit and crazy by racist Western media outlets.

We invite you to investigate the growing international controversy over the cause and treatment of AIDS for yourself. Clip and mail the coupon below for a free copy of the groundbreaking book *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* by AIDS survivor Christine Maggiore.

Fight the AID$ Fraud!

ACT UP San Francisco is the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power—a militant, direct action organization committed to ending the AIDS fraud. General body meetings are held every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at 1884 Market Street and our medical marijuana dispensary is open 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Get involved. Join ACT UP! End the abuse of AIDS.

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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPS) as outlined in its Ten-Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten-Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the US and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Our Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized US because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation). CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten-Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program
WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

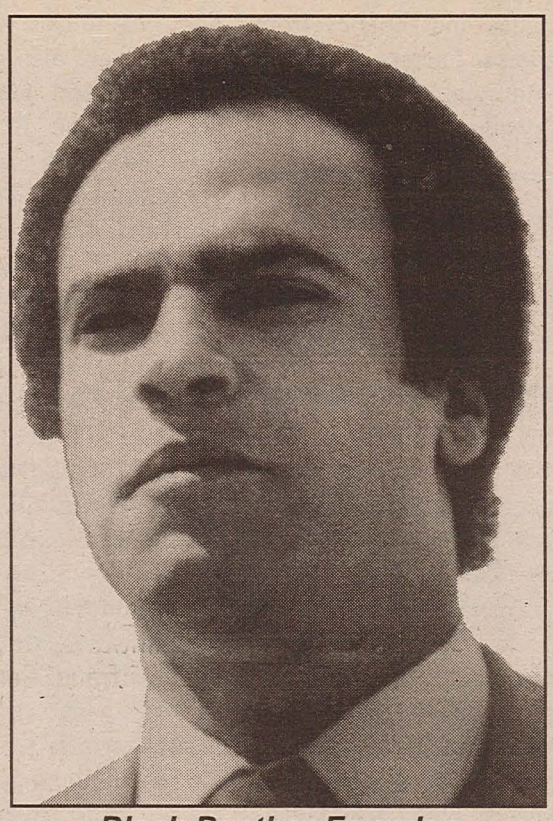
3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people on our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

The James A. Watson Wellness Center

Sponsored by the James A. Watson Wellness Center

James A. Watson, M.D. and H. Geoffrey Watson, M.D.

8 Guidelines to Healthy Living

As you enter 2005, think of strategies to stay alive. As part of your new year's resolution, give yourself life-saving solutions.

1. Prayer and meditation – Prayer and meditation will help to guide your confidence, hope and organization in your life. Prayer is known to heal.

2. Read and gain knowledge – Read current information on your health insurance and know the health care system, first aid, nutrition, fitness, etc. "If you knew better, you could do better."

3. Eat to live – Do not live to eat. Develop an understanding that a low sodium, low carbohydrate diet will help you reduce your blood pressure and weight, as well as helping to prevent diabetes.

4. Exercise regularly – Try to perform some sort of exercise 3-5 times per week. This will also help your blood pressure, heart and cholesterol, and will improve insulin sensitivity and prevent diabetes.

5. Rid yourself of addictions – Stop smoking, drinking to excess, using cocaine, heroin, narcotics or abusing yourself. "Remember that your health is truly your wealth."

6. Obtain the appropriate rest and relaxation – Sleep at least 8 hours a night. This will allow you to think clear and improve mental performance.

7. Commune with Nature – Take a walk in the park, enjoy the flowers, trees, water and air on a regular basis. Find healthy ways to relax.

8. Obtain your regular medical check ups – At least yearly, see a provider and have the following tests: Prostate exam (for men over 40), Mammogram (for women over 35) and Colon exam (anyone over 50); Blood test to evaluate cholesterol, kidney function, blood count, HIV, Hepatitis (A, B and C) and other tests as necessary.

Anyone with high blood pressure, who is African American, under stress, smokes or is overweight should have an exercise treadmill test to evaluate their heart.

These are the 8 guidelines for healthy living. Be good to yourself, and focus on staying alive in 2005. "Remember that your health is your wealth, and when you have your health, you have everything.

Listen to Dr. Watson on KDYA Channel 26

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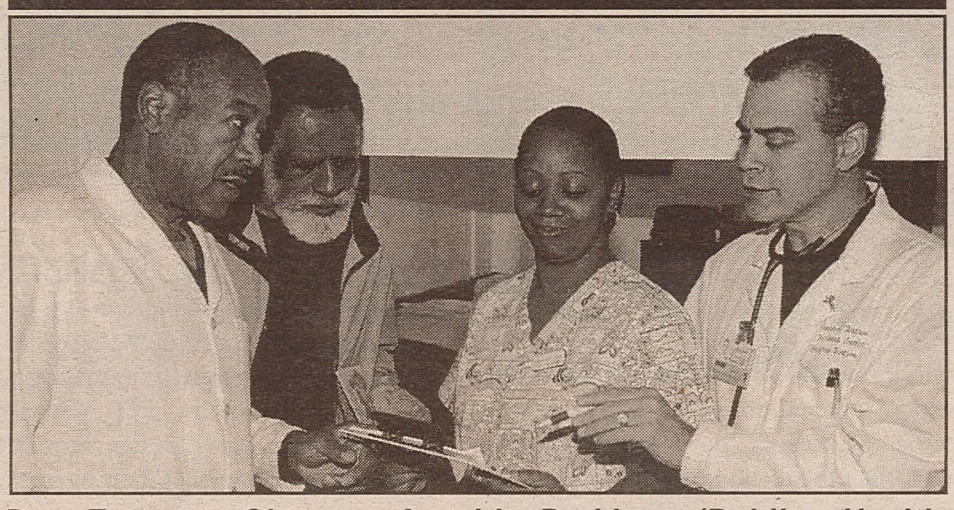

Dr. Earnest Simms, Arnold Perkins (Public Health Department), Lotonya Love (Manager) and Dr. Geoffrey Watson discuss services to be provided.

Healthy Oakland

African Americans traditionally do not live as long as their Caucasian counterparts. African American males seem to live shorter than African American females and females from other racial groups. Factors related to education about health, fear of the health care systems, financial and insurance status and ability to go to a quality health care provider are major factors in this equation. Recent studies have also shown that racism exists in medicine as it does in every major American industry. Clearly, males visit the doctor less frequently than females, and a large percentage of males can not tell you who their health care provider is. These factors, along with the fact that African Americans have more diabetes, hypertension, cancer (prostate and breast), new HIV cases, etc. has resulted in poorer outcomes as it relates to the health of African Americans.

There no longer exists a reason for any of us to have any obstacles as it relates to quality health care services.

Recently, groups of concerned individuals have merged to ensure that you can go to a quality health care provider even if you are underinsured or uninsured. Members from the Sinkler Miller Medical Association, the Healthy Oakland Project, The James A. Watson Wellness Center and others have developed a partnership with an administrative health consortium known as the Bay Area Consortium for quality health care (formerly the Bay Area Black Consortium for Healthcare). Focusing on African Americans and other minority patients has unified four clinics to serve you throughout the community. These clinics are prepared to provide high quality care with ethnic sensitivity. They are also able to care for the uninsured and underinsured individuals from the East Oakland, West Oakland, North Oakland and Berkeley communities. The organization's executive Director, Gwen Rowe Lee Sykes, has developed relationships to heal our community. The clinics included UJIMA House (East Oakland), The James A. Watson Wellness Center, The Save a Life Wellness Center (West Oakland) and the Berkeley Women and Men's Clinic.

H. Geoffrey Watson, MD serves as the Medical Director to insure clinical competency at the highest level. The consortium now is the largest network of community health clinics composed of African American administrators and health providers in Northern California. Health care for US, by US, you might say. There no longer exists a reason for any of us to have any obstacles as it relates to quality health care services.

***Lenise Henderson at* The Save-A-Life Wellness Center.**

The Bay Area Consortium for Quality Health Care Services clinics are located as follows:

The Save a Life Wellness Center
2580 San Pablo Ave.
Oakland, CA 95612
(510) 444-9155

Berkeley Health Center
2908 Ellsworth Street
Berkeley, CA 94705
(510) 843-6194

UJIMA House
9925 International Blvd., Suite 3
Oakland, CA 94603
(510) 777-9395

James A. Watson Wellness Center
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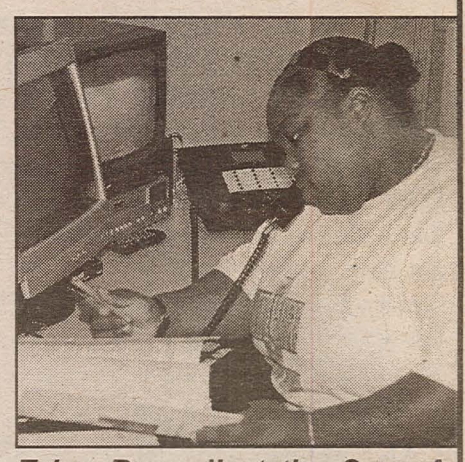
Remember always that your health is your wealth and when you have your health, you have everything.
Dr. H. Geoffrey Watson, MD



Erica Russell at the Save-A-Life Wellness Center.

Glenda McComb of Healthy Oakland Board of Directors and members of Sinkler Miller and staff from the James A. Watson Wellness Center at The Save-A-Life Wellness Center opening.